Finding England Everywhere: Representations of the Cotswolds 1880-1950

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Abstract

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This thesis is part of a growing body of literature which examines critically the imaginative construction of English national identity. It is predicated in part on the notion that landscape is a powerful idiom for representing national identity. However, it differs signally from extant literature on English national identity and therefore makes a substantial new contribution to it in two important and related ways. First, this thesis is about the *regional* identity of the Cotswolds and about the intimate connections between this identity and the construction of England and Englishness. Second, and as a consequence, this thesis rejects the South Country as a useful tool with which to conceptualise the role of landscape in the construction of English national identity. This thesis offers a new way of thinking about this construction through the idea that many regions in England, however different in terms of landscape and culture, could represent something of the nation.

This idea is explored through representations of the Cotswolds and England in fictional and non-fictional rural writing, guide books, magazine articles and topography between 1880 and 1950. The Cotswolds are constructed in these texts as a unique place and set of places but are also invoked as an ideal version of England. Despite this they sit uncomfortably in contemporary definitions of the South Country. Key themes in the construction of the Cotswolds' local identity are identified and I demonstrate that representations of this unique local culture, landscape and identity were informed by and themselves inform the construction of England and Englishness between 1880 and 1950. The South Country is shown to be a vague, ill-defined notion that has, paradoxically, shackled how we look at the role of landscape in the construction of Englishness. Instead this thesis proposes that England could be found everywhere in celebrations of diverse regional identities.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely a product of my own work and has not been conducted in collaboration with or with the assistance of any other persons.

The views expressed in this thesis are my own and not those of the University of Bristol or Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

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As I write this my department and university are faced with redundancies. I wonder if -in the future - you get this thesis out of the British Library, or inter-library loan it, whether I will still have a job in higher education in this country. Having sounded this gloomy note, I now invite you to visit the University of Exeter home page where, at the following address, you can see the most desperate picture of me ever taken:

http://www.ex.ac.uk/~abaker/cathb.html

Have fun.

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A Map of the Cotswolds

In 1903, local geologist S.S. Buckman received a letter from the Ordnance Survey stating that the district known as the Cotswold Hills was not shown on the original Ordnance Survey Maps of Gloucestershire. As the maps were then undergoing revision Buckman was asked by the O.S. to show the extent of the hills "by a red line on the One Inch Maps of the County". The letter induced Buckman to make some attempt to define the frequently used geographical term, but it proved "a far greater task" than he had anticipated. "How much is Cotteswold Hills?" he asked, "The question is often asked. To the resident of the lower Severn Valley the Hills appear definite enough - they are the long stretch of high ground which stands somewhat precipitously on the east. Here, the slope is steep, the boundary of the Hills appears very distinct; but to the south-east where the table-land dip gradually, there is no physical boundary of any importance, and the question, how far the Hills extend in that direction, is difficult to answer".[1]

Seeking some consensus of opinion, Buckman drew up a circular calling for local information on the boundaries which he sent to all the members of the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club - to which he belonged - and to residents in or near the district, the officers of the Geological Survey, the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, the press in the district and in London, and to various farmers clubs and agricultural societies. He also posted a copy in Cheltenham Library. Though he received many replies no consensus was achieved. Buckman pursued a definition through literary sources, place-name analysis, etymology, geology and topography. He received letters defining the area through popular local uses of Cotswold, village-types, stone walls and dialect. Whilst some correspondents were eager to assert their position in the Cotswolds, an old postman who worked the disputed south-western region was emphatic that local people did *not* consider themselves to be in the Cotswolds. Buckman even resorted to defining everything above the 400ft contour line as the Cotswold Hills. Though Buckman eventually drew a line on an O.S. map to mark the Cotswolds it was with the understanding that the various aspects of the Cotswolds' identity - the tangible and intangible elements - could not be resolved into a hard and fast definition.

It is because of this story that no conventional map of the Cotswolds appears in this thesis. But whilst a definition escaped Buckman, the Cotswolds' distinctive regional identity was constructed in other - perhaps unconventional - ways: through the imaginative reworking of garden imagery, stonework and craftsmanship, genius loci and topography amongst other themes. It is with this ineffable map of the Cotswolds that this thesis concerns itself.

[1]All information drawn from Buckman, S.S., 1903, "The Cotswold Hills: A Geographical Enquiry", *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalist's Field Club*, Vol. XIV, part III, pp.205-250.

Chapter One

Introduction

> In the distance rises a semi-circular rampart of mystic, green hills... There is something peculiarly fascinating about that undulating line of steep, sheer, peakless hills when viewed from the plain below. They invite exploration... They arouse a desire to tramp through the intervening woods and fields of the Vale straight across to the foot of the Edge, climb its face and discover the region that lies on the other side of that clear-cut skyline.[1]

Beyond the clear cut skyline lay the Cotswolds, the object of Alison Murray's intrigue and single minded exploratory zeal. This thesis is as much about an exploration of the Cotswolds as was Murray's slim guide book. My purpose is to interrogate, explore and explain the views of, principally, those who wrote guidebooks, non-fictional rural works, journal and magazine articles and poetry and in doing so represented the Cotswolds to themselves and to the world in different ways. I am approaching this from a broadly humanistic perspective through cultural geography. To maintain the exploratory analogy, the purpose of this introduction is purely to map out the thesis and offer remarks on my sources and aims. Substantive matters of theory and context have their own chapters.

Aims

This thesis is part of a growing body of literature which examines critically the construction of English national identity. It shows how a particular version of this identity was informed by discourses of the rural - something elaborated on in Chapter Three. It further demonstrates, in Daniels' words "the power of landscape as an idiom for representing national identity".[2] However, it also differs signally from extant literature on English national identity and therefore makes a substantial new contribution to it in two important and related ways. First, this thesis is about *regional* identity and about the intimate connections between this and the construction of England and Englishness. Second, and as a consequence, this thesis rejects the South Country as a

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[1]Murray, A., 1930, *The Cotswolds*, Crypt House Pocket Series published by the British Publishing Co. Ltd., Crypt House Press, Gloucester and London, pp.5-6.

[2]Daniels, S., 1993, *Fields of Vision - Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Polity, p.243.

useful tool with which to conceptualise the role of landscape in the construction of English national identity. Rather, this thesis offers a new way of thinking about this construction through the idea that many regions in England, however different in terms of landscape and culture, could represent something of the nation. England could be found anywhere it was felt to be. This is not to suggest that the idea of the rural is no longer important. On the contrary, it is fundamental: where England was felt to be was predominantly in rural, lightly cultivated, lightly populated areas whether they were in the north, south, east or west. This idea, which I have called "Finding England Everywhere" is detailed in Chapter Four.

From these broad statements, three research questions emerge. I have not attempted to structure the thesis rigidly around these questions but use them to guide research, thinking and writing. The first question is how were the Cotswolds represented as a unique place and set of places? This is a question that has informed my research and writing in a general way. I have deliberately included the dualism of "places and set of places" to emphasise that there are many different representations of the Cotswolds. This is not to suggest, however, that there are no enduring themes repeated through the multitude of voices speaking about the Cotswolds, hence my second research question; what were the key themes in the construction of the Cotswolds' local identity? This question is answered directly in the content of chapters four, five and six, about which more shortly.

Finally, to what extent were these representations of a unique local culture, landscape and identity informed by and themselves inform the construction of England and Englishness between 1880 and c.1950? Though deceptively straightforward, answering this question has involved examining the construction of English national identity and closely contextualising the Cotswold-specific primary source material, thus problematising and re-examining apparently innocuous themes and ideas in the Cotswold literature. This has revealed that the Cotswolds, England and their constructions are multi-dimensional spaces - sometimes different but also constructed by direct reference to each other.

The Sources

In addition to Alison Murray's method of physically scaling the escarpment, there were and are many other ways into the Cotswolds - through scientific, scholarly, popular and tourist 'discoveries', through discourses of England and Englishness, the rural, progress, preservation and modernity and through a combination of all these. My sources reflect this diversity. I have made particular use of non-fictional rural writing in books, scholarly journals and magazines and guidebooks, though categorising the texts in this way hides the immense differences in style and intent between, for example, H.J. Massingham's *Wold Without End* and M. Adeline Cook's article "A tramp through the Cotswolds" in *Girls' Realm*.[3] Similarly the category 'guidebook' might include anything from the Bristol Tramway Company's list of excursions to Harry Batsford's critical and didactic *How to See the Countryside*.[4] These differences in part reflect the sheer quantity of writing about the English countryside that was published between 1880 and 1950. However, allotting particular categories to different sorts of countryside writing is also to deny that they could have multiple readings and meanings - I am thinking particularly of the many books published by Batsford which examine ostensibly topographical, architectural and broadly rural themes but which are every bit as political as determinedly polemical texts such as *Britain and the Beast*, a collection of essays edited by Clough Williams Ellis.[5] I have also used what might broadly be called philosophical work by F.R. Leavis with Denys Thompson and also C.E.M. Joad.

I have used very little fictional literature because there are few novels set in the Cotswolds. The exception is Richard Blake Brown's *Mr. Prune on Cotswold*.[6] I have also used Laurie Lee's autobiographical *Cider with Rosie*.[7] Though *Cider with Rosie* was published in 1959 - beyond the dates of this thesis - it reflects on Lee's childhood in

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[3]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *Wold Without End*, Cobden Sanderson; Cook, M.A., 1907, "A tramp through the Cotswolds", *Girl's Realm*, pp.709-716.

[4]Bristol Tramway and Carriage Company Ltd., 1923, *Bristol Motor Coach Tours and Omnibus Services from Gloucestershire, fully described together with Maps and Illustrations*, British Publishing Co.; Batsford, H., 1940, *How to See the Countryside*, B.T. Batsford.

[5]Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Readers' Union by arrangement with J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.

[6]Blake Brown, R., 1938, *Mr. Prune on Cotswold*, Martin Secker.

[7]Lee, L., 1985, *Cider with Rosie*, Penguin. First published 1959.

the Cotswolds during the First World War and the interwar years. There is a good deal of poetry for Gloucestershire - including that of Ivor Gurney and the Dymock poets - but what little there is for the Cotswolds is by local and often amateur poets.

Scope and Outline of the Thesis

I continue this thesis in Chapter Two with a detailed examination of my theoretical and methodological perspective. This is not a theoretical thesis, though it is informed by theory. Thus this chapter is very much a backdrop to my task of writing about the Cotswolds and England and its purpose is to articulate my position in and understanding of cultural, historical and cultural-historical geography. In this chapter I pay particular attention to the retheorisation of landscape and culture, two concepts central to this thesis. This chapter is followed by another literature driven chapter, "England's Autopsy" which has two aims. First, to situate this research in contemporary currents of thinking about England and Englishness and second, to review recent critiques of English national identity and particularly those authors who examine its historical constructions. Here I begin my critique of the South Country.

Chapter Four is the first substantive primary source chapter. It takes as its theme the construction of the Cotswolds as a region of contrasts. These contrasts exist at a number of different levels; between the landscape of the nearby Severn Vale and the Cotswolds but also between the uplands and valleys of the Cotswolds themselves. I demonstrate how the cliff edge of the escarpment was seen to set the Cotswolds apart from the Vale and, indeed, England. The contrasts in the Cotswold landscape and between the Cotswolds and the Severn Vale were not merely topographical but were reflected in different emotional and imaginative responses to the landscape. I use this argument to continue my critique the idea of the South Country which, it has been argued, is a defining landscape of England and Englishness. I present an alternative thesis which I have summarised as "Finding England Everywhere". This is an argument that runs throughout this thesis.

Chapter Five develops this critique by examining the "garden of stone" metaphor - a recurring theme throughout representations of the Cotswolds. I unpack the symbolic meaning of both garden and stone and show how they are fundamental to the construction of a unique local identity for the Cotswolds. I also show how this metaphor resonates through the representation of England as composed of organic village communities which were not confined to an imaginary South Country.

In Chapter Six I examine the use of the past in representations of the Cotswolds and England. Here I further develop the theme of boundedness (begun in Chapter Four) by arguing that the Cotswolds were seen to be marooned in the past. I also explore the "door ajar" metaphor which describes a sense of being privileged to see and record something just in the process of being lost as the door to the past closes forever. I will show how this metaphor was used to mount a criticism of contemporary life. Similar criticisms were implicit in the way some authors divided England up into layers or regions each representing a different (and better) past.

Chapters Four, Five and Six focus on specific themes and motifs in the construction of Cotswold and English identity. Chapter Seven takes a slightly different approach by examining the conflicts and tensions in discoveries of the Cotswolds and rural England. I demonstrate that certain 'ways of seeing' the countryside were privileged above others and suggest that the means of discovery - by car or charabanc - was used to construct a moral geography of speed. I also examine the idea that people could be taught to encounter the countryside in acceptable ways and that the countryside itself had a didactic function.

Chapter Eight summarises the principal themes and ideas in the preceding chapters. Here I revisit the idea of "Finding England Everywhere" and draw together the disparate threads from each chapter to highlight the relations between regional and national identity, the shortcomings of the South Country as a conceptual tool and the importance and relevance of my alternative thesis.

In 1950 the author Robert Henriques introduced his own book about the Cotswolds by remarking that "This essay is all strictly and honestly about the Cotswolds. Honestly it is. It is all intended to be relevant to that particular countryside. I may find it necessary to stray at times into queer ways, but it will be only for the purpose of coming back again from a new direction".[8] I have undertaken this exploration of the Cotswolds and England very much with queer ways and new directions in mind.

[8]Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds*, Vision of England Series, general editors Williams Ellis, C. and Williams Ellis, A., Paul Elek.

Chapter Two

Framing the Research: Theoretical and Methodological Issues

Twenty-five years ago research that sought to examine the representation of the Cotswolds would not have been conducted within the academy that was geography. If it had been a descriptive historical geography of the Cotswolds it could have drawn upon either a Darbyesque tradition of reconstructing the past through historical cross-sections or, as in the Sauerian approach, as a cultural landscape fashioned by succeeding cultural groups.[1] However, in the mid-1990s this research as well as geography more broadly is informed by theories and research practices that have a rich interdisciplinary basis in the social sciences and the humanities. It would normally be the purpose of this chapter to examine these theories and research practices. However in the midst of the crisis of representation that has affected geography, such a task is increasingly fraught. As Gregory, Martin and Smith have observed, there is a lack of consensus about

> the proper research procedures, the most promising theoretical approaches, what bodies of social, political, economic and cultural theory to draw upon, the language and textual strategies to be employed and even about the very nature of our subject matter.[2]

It is increasingly difficult to hack a path through the resulting claims and counterclaims, the '"veritable plethora of critiques"[3] and fresh insights to produce a concise and unproblematic statement of theoretical loyalty. Indeed, the notion of producing a conventional essay in which a rounding-up of relevant work culminates in me pinning my colours to the standard of an 'ism' becomes more and more untenable. It is not a question of knowing how to choose which of the many epithets used to describe recent movements in human geography to describe my own approach; post-Marxism, poststructuralism, critical-realism, structurationism, feminism and postmodernism are a

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[1]Sauer, C., 1974, "The morphology of landscape", Leighly, J. (ed.), 1974, *Land and Life: Selections in the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, Berkeley, C.A. University of California Press, pp.315-350. First published 1925.

[2]Gregory, D., Martin, R. and Smith, G. (eds), 1994, "Introduction", *Human Geography - Society, Space and Social Science*, Macmillan, p.4.

[3]*Ibid.*, p.4.

few that Gregory et al. identify.[4] The problem is in thinking that choice is necessary. In his open letter to Gould, Gregory made a similar point:

> Our theories are modes of representation, ways of enabling us to figure the world like this or like that... But if I can't accept each and every representation, neither can I confine myself to a single one: and since I don't believe it possible to reconcile their various claims through a metatheoretical system of court of philosophical appeal, I have to accept that they don't just illuminate different areas but use different wavelengths to represent the landscape in different, often contradictory, ways.[5]

Gregory's statement is symptomatic of the break-up of post-positivist human geography to which Gregory et al. detail two responses. The first response is to fear for the coherence of the subject as it appears to race "towards anarchy" and fragment into specialised formulations each concerned with only "a limited range of phenomena and using a separate 'non-geographical' language of its own".[6] Another response, with which I firmly associate this work, is to see the multiplicity of approaches and methods as "tantalising opportunities for a renewed human geography".[7] Like Gregory, I am troubled by any implication that "geographical discourse is (or ought to be) constituted as a totality, that there is some essential (and essentially coherent) intellectual project called 'geography' to be fulfilled".[8] I welcome the suggestion that we have "entered an era of epistemological relativism and methodological pluralism".[9] Furthermore, I would argue that if the question of whether some coherence can or should be imposed upon the intellectual fragmentation of human geography is important, then surely such questions must equally inform my production of human geography.[10]

What follows is not, therefore, an attempt to ask or answer the question "What is my 'ism'?" in order to underwrite the rest of the research. Nor is its purpose to make a

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[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Gregory, D., 1994, "Visions of Geography: an open letter to Peter Gould", *The Canadian Geographer*, 38(3), p.207.

[6]Johnston, R.J., 1983, *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American Geography since 1945*, London, Edward Arnold; Gregory, D. et al. 1994, *op cit.*, p.4. Gregory et al. also quote Stoddart, D.R., 1987, "To claim the high ground: geography for the end of the century", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, N.S. Volume 12, pp.327-36.

[7]Ley, D., 1989, "Fragmentation, coherence and limits to theory in human geography", Kobayashi, A. and Mackenzie, S. (eds), *Remaking Human Geography*, London, Unwin Hyman, pp.227-44.

[8]Gregory, D., 1994, *op cit.*, p. 207.

[9]*Ibid.*, p.5.

[10]Gregory et al identify this question as a central issue of contention. *Ibid.*

significantly new contribution to thinking about theories and methods in geography. Rather, it is an attempt to identify thought and work which has appealed to me and informed my understanding of my subject in my growth as a geographer in the course of this research; to reflect critically on theoretical and methodological issues that frame the boundaries of my research. Because of this it is in some respects a received account, the task of which is, to paraphrase Gregory et al., to involve myself in a "dialogue with other disciplines... to produce complication as much as simplification, and to issue admissions of doubt as often as declarations of certainty".[11] I will begin by exploring the concept of landscape and then culture in the new cultural geography before addressing some methodological issues.

Theoretical Concerns

> Lost on the tide of earnest practicality and among the shingles of demonstrable fact is the real magic of geography - the sense of wonderment at the human world, the joy of seeing and reflecting upon the richly variegated mosaic of human life and of understanding the elegance of its expressions in the human landscape...[12]

When Cosgrove wrote the above for the 1986 edition of *Horizons in Human Geography*, I believe he was offering an unduly pessimistic view of the condition of geography's 'magic'.[13] Far from being lost it was in the process of being realised. The "awkward, sometimes frighteningly powerful motivating passions of human action" that Cosgrove saw as being lost to the "utilitarian functionalism"[14] of geographical explanation were already being recovered in geographies of the moral, the patriotic, the religious, sexual, and political and, importantly, landscape and culture. For the latter, the field of cultural geography produced what has been described by Cosgrove himself as a "crop of new directions" since the late 1970s.[15] To understand these it is necessary to

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[11]*Ibid.*, p.5.

[12]Cosgrove, D., 1989, "Geography is everywhere: culture and symbolism in human landscapes", Gregory, D. and Walford, R. (eds), *Horizons in Human Geography,* London, Macmillan, p.120.

[13]A view which I am sure Cosgrove did not necessarily believe wholeheartedly given the work he and others had been producing since the mid-eighties. Nevertheless the sense he gives in his *Horizons* chapter of being able to recover an aspect of human behaviour just in the process of being lost to geographical inquiry is quite compelling. Is it a strategy to rally undergraduates and discouraged cultural geographers alike?

[14]Cosgrove, D., 1989, *op cit.*, p.120.

[15]Cosgrove, D. and Jackson, P., 1987, "New directions in cultural geography", *Area*, 19(2), p.95.

return to the American roots of contemporary cultural geography[16] which were founded on the interpretation of cultural landscapes.

Sauer has been described as "the catalyst for cultural geography as well as an initiator of specific trends".[17] His work and that of his students in the Berkeley School rested on the assumption that distinctive geographical areas or landscapes could be identified and described by mapping visible elements of material culture produced by unitary cultural groups.[18] Underpinning this research was the notion that the landscape could be 'read' or viewed "as a palimpsest, a scroll of parchment which had been etched time and again, with the traces of what went before still visible to those who cared to look".[19] Culture was thus seen as a primary agent in the shaping of the landscape with cultural differences reflected in regional differentiation.[20]

The undeniably influential research of the Berkeley School was predicated on unproblematic conceptions of both landscape as a static morphological concept and culture as a set of shared practices common to a particular human group.[21] Subsequent research has sought to contest these unproblematic conceptions of landscape and culture, but has rarely contested them together. Rather there has been some work which has critically assessed the idea of landscape and other work which has addressed the notion of culture. Jackson argued in 1989 that there had been an obsession with landscape on the part of humanistic geographers to the detriment of a critique of culture. He further argued that cultural geographers must realign themselves with research in cultural studies and other theoretical developments across the social sciences to overcome the limitations

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[16]I have no wish to suggest that there was no cultural geography before Sauer and the Berkeley School. Mikesell outlines a cultural-geographic way of looking at (and thinking about) the world in Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century based on the work of August Meitzen, Eduard Hahn, Friedrich Ratzel and Robert Gradmann. Mikesell, M., 1978, "Tradition and innovation in cultural geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 68, pp.1-16.

[17]*Ibid.*, p.3.

[18]Cosgrove, D. and Jackson, P., 1987, *op cit.*

[19]Winchester, H., 1992, "The construction and deconstruction of women's roles in the urban landscape", Anderson, K. and Gale, F. (eds), *Inventing Places - Studies in Cultural Geography*, Longman Cheshire, p.139-140.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]Cosgrove, D., 1983, "Towards a radical cultural geography: problems of theory", *Antipode*, 15(1), p.1-11; Cosgrove, D. 1989, *op cit.*

of a traditional view of culture and landscape.[22] I would argue that both the rethinking of landscape *and* critiques of culture offer to enrich cultural geography and what follows is a review of both of these developments.

Landscape in Old and New Cultural Geographies

The concept of landscape is very important in this thesis which develops the idea that landscape can be a means through which national identity is represented and constructed. This critical reading of landscape is made possible by its refiguring in the new cultural geography. This section will explore changes in the way landscape has been thought about and theorised.

Duncan has argued that, to a large extent, the intellectual context for landscape studies in the 1960s was set by Sauer and also W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson.[23] This rather sweeping statement overlooks important differences between these three scholars' conceptions of landscape which indicate the direction in which the study of landscape subsequently moved.[24]

In "The Morphology of Landscape" Sauer defined landscape as "the unit concept of geography", a "particularly geographic association of facts".[25] Under Sauer's morphological method, landscape became a static determinate object of scientific enquiry which excludes subjectivity.[26] Nevertheless, even in his eagerness to develop landscape as a strictly scientific term, Sauer found it necessary to recognise the subjective meaning implied by artistic and poetic uses of landscape. He acknowledged that there remained

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[22]Jackson, P., 1989, *Maps of Meaning - An Introduction to Cultural Geography*, London, Unwin Hyman.

[23]Duncan, J., 1994, "Landscape", Johnston, R.J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D.M. (eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Blackwell.

[24]Meinig has pointed out that Jackson and Hoskins in particular were "very different men who have sought to open our eyes to different things for different purposes". Meinig, D. (ed), 1979, "Reading the landscape - an appreciation of W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson", *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, Oxford University Press.

[25]Sauer, C.O., 1925, "The morphology of landscape", *University of California Publications in Geography*, 2, p.25.

[26]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, Croom Helm, London and Sydney.

an aspect of meaning in landscape which lay beyond science, the understanding of which could not be reduced to formal process.[27]

W.G. Hoskins' view of landscape seemed to be akin to Sauer's in some respects and very different in others. Landscape, for instance, was viewed by both as a record of human agency which could be 'read' through detailed rigorous field research. However, there seemed to be a great deal more scope for subjectivity in Hoskins' work, especially in its promotion of landscape appreciation. Whilst Meinig is critical of what he called Hoskins' "deep sentimental bias laced through all his landscape writing", Matless sees Hoskins' presentation of England as a very personal and distinctive one.[28] On the other hand, Sauer's and Hoskins' work can be seen as means of resisting changes wrought by modernity. Sauer provided a perspective on the environment as deformed, deflected and appropriated by human beings and made an implicit moral stand against the destructive exploitation of the Earth's resources.[29] In a very famous statement, Hoskins argued that, since the advent of the twentieth century, "every single change in the English landscape has either uglified it or destroyed its meaning or both".[30]

J.B. Jackson is credited with opening out the concept of landscape thereby "liberating both spectator and participant, by writing from the inside and pointing to the symbolic meanings which arise from social life in particular geographical settings".[31] Cosgrove has argued that the humanistic study of landscape owes to Jackson a particular debt, acknowledged by the collection of essays entitled *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*.[32] In his editorial introduction, Meinig argued that Jackson's revealing essays showed that "every landscape is a code, and its study may be undertaken as a deciphering of meaning, of the cultural and social significance of ordinary but diagnostic features".[33]

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[27]*Ibid.*
[28]Meinig, D., 1979, *op cit.*, p.208; Matless, D., 1993, "One Man's England: W.G. Hoskins and the English Culture of Landscape", *Rural History*, 4 (2), pp.187-207.
[29]Jackson, P., 1989, *op cit.*
[30]Hoskins, W.G., 1978, *One Man's England*, London, p.8.
[31]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*, p.34.
[32]Meinig, D., 1979, *op cit.*
[33]*Ibid.*, p.6.

The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes, published in 1979, is described by James Duncan as the "most significant work to appear in this period".[34] Whilst it followed the Sauerian tradition in arguing that "every landscape is an accumulation, and its study may be undertaken as a formal history, methodologically defining the making of the landscape from the past to the present",[35] it crucially departed from Sauer's work by focusing on ordinary, intimate, everyday landscapes. Although it hinted at a different theorisation of landscape by arguing that "landscape is defined by our own vision and interpreted by our minds" the book was nevertheless predicated on a very Sauerian notion that "landscape displays us as cultures".[36] Yet the book also broke new ground by bringing to the foreground and warmly celebrating the influence of Hoskins and J.B. Jackson, who, as I have shown, held subtly different conceptions of landscape.

While the publication of *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* might in retrospect be seen as an important moment in the development of *cultural* geography in Britain, *historical* geography had been using landscape as a focus of study for some years. It would be wrong to overlook Darby's ideas on landscape and its study, but it must be acknowledged that his work has actually gained very little recognition from cultural geographers.

For Darby it seemed self-evident that it was "the purpose of geography to explain the landscape"[37]. His technique of applying geographical methods to historical data to produce thick cross-sections and analysis of vertical themes were geared towards understanding the landscape - for Darby, an indisputable part of geographical study. He struggled with the problem of "reconciling the sequential nature of words with the instantaneous apprehension of a visual scene", pointing out that "we can look at a picture as a whole, and it is as a whole that it leaves an impression on us; we can, however, read only line by line".[38]

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[34]Duncan, J., 1994, *op cit.*, p.316.
[35]Meinig, D., 1979, *op cit.*, p.6.
[36]*Ibid.*, p.3.
[37]Williams, M., 1989, "Historical geography and the concept of landscape", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 15 (1), p.92.
[38]*Ibid.*, p.93; Darby, H.C., 1932, "The problem of geographical description", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30, pp.1-14.

It is clear that Darby, like Sauer, conceived of landscape as something that could be unproblematically read and deciphered through diligent enquiry but, whilst he was critical of method, Darby remained largely uncritical of the idea of landscape itself. His 1952 paper "The changing English landscape" has been described by Williams as "a radical departure" which sought to integrate people and the world they inhabited based on the *implicit* rationale that landscape was "not merely an artifact but an expression of human ideas, attitudes and aesthetics".[39] Nevertheless other critics have labelled the Darbyesque landscape as "bloodless" in which, where people appear at all, it is as main actors in a "*narrowly* economic geography of the past".[40] Darby is not mentioned by name in Cosgrove's chapter on the idea of landscape in *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* in which Sauer and Jackson receive attention. Instead, Cosgrove observed that

> When historical geographers have attempted to incorporate historical change into landscape study they have been forced into unconvincing methodological gymnastics, using devices like cross-sections, sequent occupance or thematic change through time.[41]

From the lack of reference to Darby's work in books and articles on landscape and geography it is clear that his ideas have not received the attention that Sauer and others have enjoyed. Perhaps the blame for this as could be laid at the door of Darby's critics, who as Williams argues, could be

> accused of creating a tyranny of criticism that has possibly dissuaded would-be historical geographers from involving themselves in the study of landscapes and thereby evolving new methods and techniques for investigating them.[42]

Thus, as academic liberalism and intellectual catholicity began to remove the boundaries between disciplines and subject matter, Darby's work was ignored in favour of new theories and methodologies from, among others, cultural studies, literary studies and art history which offered new ways of thinking about landscape to geographers. Peter

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[39]Williams, M., 1989, *op cit.*, p.95.
[40]Gregory, D., 1984, "Some *terrae incognitae* in historical geography: an exploratory discussion", Baker, A.R.H. and Gregory, D. (eds), *Explorations in Historical Geography*, Cambridge, p.186, 192.
[41]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*, p.32.

Jackson suggests that some of these new ways of thinking about landscape informed the reorientation of geography away from the social sciences towards the humanities in the 1970s.[43] This humanistic approach is seen as challenging positive science by undertaking a sympathetic treatment of human individuality, subjectivity and creativity. Within this approach, argues Cosgrove, landscape has "re-emerged... as an important term because its affective meaning seems to allow for an escape from the outsider's position and for the incorporation of sensitivity to human engagement with particular places and areas".[44]

Such an approach in the 1970s was exemplified by the work of Samuels. Samuels sought to develop a clear methodology for landscape study and searched for ways of incorporating human meaning into the purposes of geographical understanding, arguing that "there is something unreasonable about a human landscape lacking in inhabitants; something strangely absurd about a geography of man [sic] devoid of men [sic]".[45] His work attempted to incorporate both subjective and objective ways of knowing in an approach that could draw upon humanistic traditions that examine the expressions of human creativity in art and artifice and particularly biography.[46] He can be seen to turn around the notion of landscape as something that can be read to suggest that it is 'authored' by real people operating in determinate contexts, not by impersonal forces[47] and argued that

> The fact that we need not identify anyone in particular, that culpability and responsibility in and for the landscape have become irrelevant to the quest for landscape meaning... reveals something terribly wrong about the way in which we look at events and assess the meaning of landscape... It reveals a context in which the idiosyncratic, the particular, the individual himself [sic] and the self itself have lost much of their own meaning.[48]

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[42]Williams, M., 1989, *op cit.*, p.94.
[43]Jackson, P., 1989, *op cit.*
[44]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*, p.34.
[45]*Ibid.*; Samuels, M.S., 1979, "The biography of landscape - cause and culpability", Meinig, D. (ed), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, p.52.
[46]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*
[47]*Ibid.*
[48]Samuels, M.S., 1979, *op cit.*, p.52-3.

Samuel concludes that we should "concentrate upon the evidence, direct and indirect, that individuals have left as explanation, rationalisation, or description of their intentions".[49]

Samuels' approach, though situated within humanism, was not without criticism even from other geographers who would readily associate themselves with a humanistic tradition. Samuels drew attention to the philosophical and methodological issues that arose from his approach without satisfactorily addressing them. He highlighted the problem of using idealist or materialist modes of explanation by arguing that "the ancient distinction between a world imagined and a world lived-in... persists to condition the way in which we come to understand the nature of authored landscapes".[50] He addressed this problem by defining overlapping categories of landscape: landscapes of "impression" (more *about* that *in* the landscape, argues Cosgrove) and landscapes of "expression" whose authors are identified in the landscape.[51] Cosgrove has pointed out that this is an evasive distinction because it restates the central contradictions of the landscape idea; opposition between subject and object, insider and outsider.[52]

Cosgrove identifies Samuels' biography of landscape as an attempt to give a formal academic structure and method to J.B. Jackson's informal penetration of the layers of meaning in the landscape and argues, too, that Samuels' humanism offers a means of viewing landscape as an insider while sustaining a degree of scholarly detachment. This can only be achieved, however, "at the expense of disregarding the social dimensions of landscape and adopting assumptions of voluntarist individualism".[53] He further points out that Samuels ignored the dynamic and historical aspects of landscape which included an account of changes under succeeding 'authors' in time and space. Notwithstanding these criticisms, the treatment of landscape in the sort of humanistic geography that Samuels practised demonstrated "that the issues raised by landscape and its meaning point to the very heart of social and historical theory: issues of individual and collective action, of objective and subjective knowing, of idealist and

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[49]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*, p.36.
[50]Samuels, M.S., 1979, *op cit.*, p.69.
[51]*Ibid.*, p.70-78; Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*
[52]*Ibid.*
[53]*Ibid.*, p.37.

materialist explanation".[54] Yet fundamental difficulties remained. Geographic humanism sought to establish the identity and experience of the insider in order to reverse the traditional stress on the outsider's view and the morphology of external forms, but, argues Cosgrove, "in neither case is the picture frame broken and the landscape inserted into the historical process".[55]

This criticism is addressed at least in part by Cosgrove's own *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* in which he traces the rise and decline of the idea of landscape from the Renaissance and attempts to show how this idea and its development were a result of specific economic conditions of the times and by the economic conditions of individual artists.[56] He points to "the changes in meaning that landscape has undergone, especially from a moral concept in the early modern period, to one which now involves either a scientific or an aesthetic mode of apprehending".[57] He illustrates the latter with reference to the work of geographers and, in particular, humanistic geographers.[58] By introducing a history of landscape as an idea, Cosgrove is proposing that there is no such singly ontological thing as landscape, only a very powerful *idea* of landscape - so powerful in fact that it is still seen as being in some respects 'real', something tangible that has an independent existence beyond our conception of it. This is not to suggest that landscape cannot be manifested materially or its representation have material consequences, as Cosgrove points out. The idea of landscape developed in the Renaissance, for instance, specifically referred to the intellectual refiguring of people's apprehension, control and ordering of their environment.

This difference between landscape as an idea and landscape as *'real'* is hinted at in the differences between definitions of landscape and place, space or environment. Cosgrove can argue that,

> unlike *place* [landscape] reminds us of our position in the scheme of nature. Unlike *environment* or *space* it reminds us that only through human

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[54]*Ibid.*, p.37, 38.
[55]*Ibid.*, p.38.
[56]Sack, R.D., 1986, Review of *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape, Journal of Historical Geography*, 12 (1), p.112-115.
[57]*Ibid.*, p.113.
[58]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*

> consciousness and reason is that scheme known to us, and only through technique can we participate as humans in it. At the same time landscape reminds us that geography *is* everywhere, that it is a constant source of beauty and ugliness, of right and wrong and joy and suffering, as much as it is of profit and loss.[59]

Thus landscape is refigured as a concept which makes sense of a particular relationship between society and land.

In a review of cultural geography in 1987, Cosgrove and Jackson pointed to recent work which emphasised the fact that the landscape concept is itself a sophisticated cultural construction.[60] They further noted that the symbolic qualities of landscape which produce or sustain social meaning or as "a particular way of composing, structuring and giving meaning to an external world" had become the focus of research.[61] Winchester's study of women's role in the urban landscape exemplifies this approach to landscape. She argues that

> Some postmodernists would also consider that differing interpretations of the same landscape may be of equal validity. A landscape may be viewed in different ways by different people... Each person or group views, uses and constructs the same landscape in different ways; these are neither 'right' nor 'wrong', but rather are part of the many layers of meaning within one landscape. The landscape has layers of artefacts which may derive from historical usage; it also has layers of meaning which stem from the multiple uses of the same environment.[62]

Interesting work over the last ten years has applied interpretative metaphors such as spectacle or text to landscape. Such metaphors implicate a web of social processes and intersubjective meaning which open up enticing possibilities for creative understanding, exploration and (re)presentation of landscape(s).[63] For instance, Anderson's interpretation of the meanings of North American Chinatowns treats the landscape as a text expressing European representations of the 'Orient'.[64] I wish to

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[59]Cosgrove, D., 1989, *op cit.*, p.122.
[60]Cosgrove, D. and Jackson, P., 1987, *op cit.*, p.96.
[61]*Ibid.*, p.96.
[62]Winchester, H., 1992, *op cit.*, p.139-140.
[63]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, "Introduction", *Place/Culture/Representation*, Routledge, London and New York.
[64]Anderson, K., 1988, "Cultural hegemony and the race-definition process in Chinatown, Vancouver: 1880-1980", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6, pp.127-149.

consider the use of metaphors for landscape in a discussion on representation in the methodological section. This is for two reasons. First, the use of metaphors such as text and spectacle are part of the crisis of representation in geography which has arisen from "uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality".[65] As a result some theoretical debates have shifted to the level of method. Second, whilst this section has dealt with the appropriation and theorisation of landscape, not less important is the theorisation of culture and its use by cultural geographers which the next section addresses.

Refiguring Culture in New Cultural Geographies

"Culture" remarks Mitchell, with some justification, "is an incredibly slippery term",[66] one which has been used to describe, variously, the human appropriation of nature, the development of the human mind and "an abstract process or the product of such a process" with "definite class associations".[67] As an idea used to differentiate and to classify, the different senses of the word culture indicate

> a complex argument about the relations between general human development and a particular way of life, and between the works and practices of art and intelligence.[68]

For Mitchell, the idea of culture therefore describes at least five things:

> (i) the actual, often unexamined, patterns and differentiations of a people ('culture'); (ii) the processes by which these patterns developed ('culture' makes 'cultures'); (iii) the markers of differentiation between one people and another (individuals are part of 'a culture'); (iv) the way all these processes, patterns and markers are represented ('cultural activity')' and (v) the hierarchical ordering of all these activities, processes, productions and ways of life (comparing 'cultures').[69]

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[65]Marcus, G.E. and Fischer, M.M.J., 1986, "A crisis of representation in the human sciences", *Anthropology as Cultural Critique - an experimental moment in the human sciences*, Chicago University of Chicago Press, pp.8-9.
[66]Mitchell, D., 1995, "There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, N.S. 20, p.104.
[67]Williams, R., 1983, *Keywords*, Fontana Press, London, p.88.
[68]*Ibid.*, p.92.
[69]Mitchell, D., 1995, *op cit.*, pp.104-105.

In American cultural geography all these meanings of culture were represented in a super-organic mode of explanation. This was outlined by two anthropologists, Kroeber and Lowie, in the first quarter of the twentieth century.[70] In the superorganic, culture was viewed as "an entity above man, not reducible to actions by the individuals, who are associated with it, mysteriously responding to laws of its own". Thus, the notion of culture is assigned ontological status and causative power.[71] This view of culture as a totality which imprinted its messages mechanically on the residents of a culture area came to dominate American cultural geography.[72] It was adopted in particular by Sauer as a result of his association with Kroeber and Lowie, and subsequently passed on to Sauer's students. Duncan has argued that whilst some students of the Berkeley School may have been ambivalent about the theory, others like Wilbur Zelinsky were exceptionally explicit in their endorsement of it.[73]

In 1963, Brookfield complained that cultural geographers "scarcely ever seek explanation in matters such as human behaviour, attitudes and beliefs, social organisation and the characteristics and interrelationships of human groups".[74] In doing so, Brookfield was hinting at not only the variety of alternative definitions of culture by anthropologists, but also their devastating attack on and rejection of superorganic theory. Mikesell argued that this lack of concern over theoretical debates outside geography may have been because geographers "regard the discipline as an autonomous enterprise set apart from the social or natural sciences".[75] Fifteen years after Brookfield's comments, Mikesell had cause to argue in 1978 that geographers had adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards the meaning of culture the use of which they should give more serious thought.[76]

In 1980 two geographers working in Canada and England issued separate but similar pleas for cultural geography. "Can the concept of culture be saved?" asked James

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[70]Duncan, J., 1980, "The Superorganic in American cultural geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 70 (2), pp.181-198.
[71]*Ibid.*, p.181, 182.
[72]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*
[73]Duncan, J., 1980, *op cit.*
[74]Brookfield, H.C., 1963, "Questions on the human frontiers of geography", *Economic Geography*, 40, p.283.
[75]Mikesell, M.K., 1978, *op cit.*, p.12.

Duncan at the end of his criticism of the superorganic in American cultural geography.[77] Not, he argued, if it was to be used to explain anything about a group of people by referring to all the characteristics of that group. Culture could only be saved if it was no longer viewed as "an autonomous object requiring a self-contained level of inquiry but rather as the context for social interaction".[78] The rejection of a reified notion of culture would cause the distinction between social and cultural geography to collapse opening up new possibilities for research on "individuals and groups of individuals in relation to particular socio-historical landscapes".[79] In the same year Jackson grumbled that British geographers had only a sketchy idea of what cultural geography entailed and what its possibilities might be.[80] After reviewing the American tradition Jackson offered the conclusion that

> Cultural geography can finally only be of interest to the British geographical profession if it can successfully accomplish a rapprochement with social geography, in a joint commitment to study the spatial aspects of social organisation and human culture - not just those aspect which are directly observable in the landscape.[81]

Yet the geographical profession *did* demonstrate an interest in cultural geography without a complete and successful compromise with social geography taking place. Whilst theoretical developments in social geography have contributed to a reconceptualisation of culture, so have developments in cultural studies, literary theory and anthropology. Perhaps with some chagrin on the part of at least one of the authors, Cosgrove and Jackson noted in 1987 that there was still a great deal of scope "within social geography... to develop alternative ways of theorising culture...".[82]

Jackson and Duncan have been described as making "the most complete and fruitful statements of cultural theory in the new cultural geography".[83] James Duncan, in his study of the Kandyan Kingdom, developed culture as a signifying system using

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[76]*Ibid.*
[77]Duncan, J., 1980, *op cit.*, p.198.
[78]*Ibid.*, p.198.
[79]*Ibid.*, p.198.
[80]Jackson, P., 1980, "A plea for cultural geography", *Area*, 12, pp.110-113.
[81]*Ibid.*, p.113.
[82]Cosgrove, D., and Jackson, P., 1987, *op cit.*, p.98.

discourse theories.[84] In *Maps of Meaning*, Jackson theorised culture as a level, domain, idiom or medium in which the meanings of a plurality of cultures is expressed.[85] These definitions are, in some respects, quite different from each other - for instance in their differing emphasis on theories of discourse. But they also share many similarities, such as seeing culture as socially constructed and contested. Further, they understand culture as a sphere or realm of social life separable but related to economics and politics.[86] Mitchell has recently argued that using spatial metaphors to conceptualise culture has had the effect of "mystifying processes of social power as well as continuing to reify the essentially empty, untethered abstraction of culture" with the result that culture is still seen as having ontological reality.[87] In reply Jackson has accepted that the metaphors of domain, level, medium and arena "all bear their own ideological freight and reify culture to a degree that I would now find unacceptable".[88]

Notwithstanding his own criticisms of geographers' use of culture, Mitchell has argued that similarities in the way culture is theorised allow us to see

> An emerging consensus on how to theorise 'culture' in geography while still understanding that this consensus does not necessarily imply a unity of belief about the total composition of 'culture'.[89]

Nevertheless it is a troubled consensus. Mitchell's criticisms of the work of Jackson, Duncan and Cosgrove in "There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualisation of the idea of culture in geography" was rejected as not a reconceptualisation at all, merely an "elaboration and refinement of current ideas" - and this was amongst the kinder responses to his paper.[90]

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[83]Mitchell, D., 1995, "There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, N.S. 20, p.114.
[84]Duncan, J., 1990, *The City as Text: the Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
[85]Jackson, P., 1989, *op cit.*
[86]Mitchell, D., *op cit.*
[87]*Ibid.*
[88]Jackson, P., 1996, "The idea of culture: a reply to Don Mitchell", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 21,3, p.573.
[89]Mitchell, D., 1995, *op cit.*, p.105.
[90]Duncan, J. and Duncan, N., 1996, "Reconceptualising the idea of culture in geography: a reply to Don Mitchell", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 21,3, p.578.

Using a Retheorised Notion of Culture

In *Maps of Meaning* Jackson railed against "the traditional obsession" of cultural geographers with landscape and argued that "cultural geography is in urgent need of reappraisal; its conception of culture is badly outdated and its interest in the physical expression of culture in the landscape is unnecessarily limited".[91] Jackson's conception of culture was founded in the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham. His programmatic purpose was to seek "alternative approaches to the geographical study of culture from the traditional obsession with landscape".[92] Among these alternative approaches he identified three particular areas for research best suited to a reconstituted cultural geography; the theory of uneven development, the concept of spatial divisions of labour and the reciprocal links between social relations and spatial structures.[93]

Notwithstanding these attempts to redirect cultural geography, Duncan and Ley have argued that "landscape and place have assumed a remarkably central position in current interdisciplinary interpretations of our times".[94] There are two explanations for this. Duncan and Ley point firstly to the "sheer visible presence of landscape" which provides a "convenient grounding and point of departure for discussion of less fixed and visible cultural domains".[95] But this only offers a partial reason for the centrality of landscape and place. A second explanation for this is that the landscape is one of the central elements in a cultural system.[96] Thus the presumed certainties of cultural identity were identified with particular places which "housed stable cohesive communities of shared tradition and perspective".[97] The breaking-down of this conception of culture and place means that places are no longer the clear supporters of identity.[98] The result is

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[91]Jackson, P., 1989, *op cit.*, p.3, 9.
[92]*Ibid.*, p.3.
[93]*Ibid.*
[94]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*, p.12.
[95]*Ibid.*, p.12.
[96]Duncan, J., 1990, *op cit.*, p.17.
[97]Carter, E., Donald, J. and Squires, J. (eds), 1993, "Introduction", *Space And Place, Theories Of Identity And Location*, Lawrence and Wishart, p.x.
[98]Morley, D. and Robins, K., 1993, "There's no place like *Heimat*: images of Home(land) in European culture", Carter, E., Donald, J. and Squires, J. (eds), *Space And Place, Theories Of Identity And Location*, Lawrence and Wishart, p.5.

that re-theorisations of culture are closely linked to rethinking place and landscape - a point amply demonstrated by *Place/Culture/Representation* in which interpreting and theorising landscapes is a prominent theme in most of the essays.[99] Similarly the success of the essays in *Inventing Places* in showing how people construct spaces, places, landscapes, regions and environments results from a theorisation of culture as a process, a "dynamic mix of symbols, beliefs, languages and practices that people create, not a fixed thing or an entity governing humans".[100]

Retheorising culture has allowed geographers to rethink its relationship with power. A dominant group will seek to establish its own experience of the world as the objective and valid culture of all people and in this way power is expressed and sustained in the reproduction of culture.[101] The breaking down of a superorganic conception of culture has implicated geography in the maintenance of cultural hegemony. Geographers can celebrate a society which is constituted by a plurality of dominant and marginal cultures and where hegemonic culture is negotiated, resisted and selectively appropriated, but in doing so must recognise the role of superorganic theories in supporting cultural hegemony. As Duncan and Ley point out, "cultural representations... invoke both ideology and power".[102] It is an awareness of, in particular, the profound ethnocentricity of cultural representations that has led to "an urgent reappraisal of the specificity of the other, and an acknowledgment that geography is centrally implicated in the constitution of difference".[103] In the abandonment of superorganicism, geography may now embark on undermining dominant cultural representations of the other by revealing that "they are less regularities of nature than conventions of a situated - geographic - imagination".[104]

Duncan and Ley argue that cultural explanations have frequently had to defend themselves from an all pervading economicism in geographical enquiry. It should be clear though that cultural geography has recovered culture from its position as a residual

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[99]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), *Place/Culture/Representation*, Routledge, London and New York.
[100]Anderson, K. and Gale, F. (eds), 1992, "Introduction", *Inventing Places - Studies in Cultural Geography*, Longman Cheshire, p.3-4.
[101]Cosgrove, D., 1989, *op cit.*
[102]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*, pp.11-12.
[103]*Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

element, a "secondary realm of variation left over after more powerful explanations have run their course".[105] In the enthusiasm to work with new theorisations of culture we must beware of culturalism which overlooks the "constant imbrication of, amongst others, cultural, economic and political processes" that is necessary for any interpretation of landscape.[106] Thus landscape has always been closely connected in human geography with culture but new theorisations of both elements have important implications for methodology. Cosgrove has shown that "to reveal the meanings in the cultural landscape requires the imaginative skill to enter the world of others in a self-conscious way and then *re*-present that landscape at a level where its meanings can be exposed and reflected upon".[107] It is to questions of methodology and representation that this essay now turns.

Methodological Concerns

The refiguring of landscape and culture has suggested new ways of studying them. Among the first of these was *The Iconography of Landscape* - a book on a method that has historically been the preserve of art historians. That such a book could be written by geographers indicates the broadening of both the sources and methods available to cultural geographers (although an important caveat will be applied to *The Iconography of Landscape* later in this chapter). As Cosgrove and Daniels point out,

> If landscape is regarded as a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising human surroundings, then landscapes may be studied across a variety of media and surfaces: in paint on canvas, writing on paper, images on film as well as in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground.[108]

The problem is, of course, that refiguring landscape in this way poses questions about how to study it, how to *represent* it. I think representation is both a theoretical and methodological issue, but I have chosen to talk about it in my methodological section because the crisis of representation impacts most powerfully on method. Postmodern epistemologies have exposed the problematic representational nature of

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[104]*Ibid.*, p.13.
[105]*Ibid.*, p.12.
[106]*Ibid.*, p.12.
[107]Cosgrove, D., 1989, *op cit.*, p.124.
[108]Daniels, S. and Cosgrove, D., 1987, "Iconography and landscape", Cosgrove, D. and Daniels, S. (eds), *The Iconography of landscape*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.1.

descriptions of the world and highlighted the cultural specificity of those representations.[109] Consequently, as Marcus and Fischer have argued,

> the most interesting theoretical debates in a number of fields have shifted to the level of method, to problems of epistemology, interpretation, and discursive forms of representation themselves, employed by social thinkers. Elevated to a central concern of theoretical reflection, problems of description become problems of representation.[110]

Up until quite recently the question of how we represent the world has been taken for granted. For instance, the methodological mainstay of cultural geography - descriptive fieldwork - was founded in mimesis or the belief that we should strive to produce as accurate a reflection of the world as possible.[111] Mimesis is predicated on the enlightenment belief that language and imagery are transparent media through which a neutral, univocal visible world could be represented and unproblematically understood.[112] Modern literary and artistic criticism takes a very different view. Jameson has described words and imagery as a prison house in which we are locked into particular modes of understanding.[113] As W.J.T. Mitchell has argued, "there is no vision without purpose... the innocent eye is blind...[the] world is already clothed in our systems of representation".[114]

Thus cultural geographers' claims to have represented people, culture or landscape are in fact a form of power that has been exercised over groups less powerful than themselves. Jackson notes that "recent years have witnessed some significant challenges to this virtual hegemony in the power of representation, with the development of history-from-below,[115] the feminist critique of masculinist forms of knowledge,[116] and

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[109]Duncan, J. and Sharp, J.P., 1993, "Confronting representation(s)", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 11, p.473.

[110]Marcus, G.E. and Fischer, M.M.J., 1986, *op cit.*, pp.8-9.

[111]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*

[112]*Ibid.*

[113]Jameson, F., 1972, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press. For a sustained examination and criticism of mimesis see Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*

[114]Mitchell, W.J.T., 1986, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.38.

[115]Jackson, P., 1992, "Constructions of culture, representations of race: Edward Curtis' 'way of seeing'", Anderson, K. and Gale, F. (eds), *Inventing Places - Studies in Cultural Geography*, Longman

the growing realisation of a 'crisis of representation' throughout the human sciences".[117] Two significant challenges to mimesis have come in the form of postmodernism and interpretive methodologies such as description and narration.[118]

Duncan and Ley have argued that postmodernism has launched

> a radical attack upon the mimetic theory of representation and the search for truth. In this sense it is anti-foundational in that it explicitly rejects the totalising ambitions of modern social science. A postmodern orientation distrusts and interrogates all meta-narratives including those of the researcher.[119]

In a footnote Duncan and Ley qualify their use of postmodernism by referring "specifically and narrowly to a radical attempt to decenter the authority of the writer, and often to implement experimental styles of writing".[120] It is precisely these aspects of the postmodern challenge to mimesis that have failed. Experiments in writing conducted by, for instance, Olsson and Pred which have attempted to "shake loose creative and plural readings of a text, to challenge the tyranny of the world, through ambiguity and language games" have not succeeded in removing the control of the author, whose presence is "ever more evident in strongly stylised forms of writing".[121] Further challenges to mimesis which have attempted to shift representational control away from male western academics have not succeeded in removing the authority of the author who retained control over the definition and execution of the project. Duncan and Ley conclude that "a truly radical relativism cannot be secured in practice".[122]

Cheshire, p.89. Jackson cites Samuel, R. (ed), 1981, *People's History and Socialist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

[116]Jackson cites Harding, S., 1986, *The Science Question in Feminism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y.

[117]Jackson cites Marcus, G.E. and Fischer, M.M.J. 1986, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

[118]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*

[119]*Ibid.*, p.3.

[120]*Ibid.*, p.17-18.

[121]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. cite Olsson, G., 1980, *Birds in Egg: Eggs in Bird*, London, Pion; Olsson, G. 1990, "Lines of power", Barnes T. and Duncan, J. (eds), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, London, Routledge, pp.86-96; Pred, A., 1990, *Lost Words and Lost Worlds: Modernity and the Language of Life in Late Nineteenth Century Stockholm*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*, p.7-8.

[122]*Ibid.*, p.7-8.

A second attempt to resolve the crisis of representation comes from interpretative practices based in hermeneutics. Duncan and Ley have argued that "hermeneutics provides a more satisfactory form of representation than that offered by postmodern ethnography because it allows for dialogue between the researcher and his or her subject and yet does not misrepresent the power relations that are structured in the Western academy".[123] A hermeneutic approach specifically recognises that interpretation is a dialogue between one's data and the researcher who is embedded within a particular intellectual and institutional context. A perfect copy of the world is not possible because the researcher is present in that textual copy. Duncan and Ley point out that a number of theoretical positions within geography adopt a broad definition of hermeneutics. For example, certain types of humanistic geography, including Marxian humanism, as well as a new cultural geography influenced by the work of Geertz and post-structural anthropologists all adopt hermeneutic modes of representation.[124] A broadly hermeneutic approach was adopted in Christian's review of black feminist criticism in which she urged researchers to recognise and theorise the site of his or her representation, to

> let go of their distanced and false stance of objectivity and... expose their own point of view - the tangle of background, influences, political perspectives, training, situations, that helped form and inform their interpretations.[125]

Three major components of representation reflect the hermeneutician's concern to recognise their relationship to their data and their own positionality. These three components are:

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[123]*Ibid.*, p.9.

[124]See for instance Buttimer, A., 1974, *Values in Geography*, Resource Paper no. 24, Washington D.C., Association of American Geographers; Ley, D. and Samuels, M., 1978, *Humanistic Geography*, Chicago, Maaroufa; Cosgrove, D., 1983, *op cit.*; Cosgrove, D. and Daniels, S. (eds), 1987, *op cit.*; Duncan, J., 1990, *op cit.*; Duncan, J. and Duncan, N., 1988, "(Re)reading the landscape", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6, 117-126; Gregory, D., 1989, "Areal differentiation and postmodern human geography", Gregory, D. and Walford, R. (eds), *New Horizons in Human Geography*, London, Macmillan, 67-96; Ley, D., 1987, "Styles of the times: liberal and neoconservative landscapes in inner Vancouver, 1968-1986", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 13, pp.40-56; Ley, D. 1989, "Modernism, postmodernism and the struggle for place", Agnew J. and Duncan, J. (eds), *The Power of Place*, London, Unwin Hymen, pp.44-65.

[125]Christian, B., 1989, "But what do we think we're doing anyway: the state of black feminist criticism(s) or my version of a little bit of history", Wall, C. (ed.) *Changing our own Worlds: Essays on Criticism Theory and Writing by Black Women*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, p.67.

1. The text - a journal article, book or idea.
2. The extra-textual field of reference - the 'data' used in the production of the text.
3. The inter-textual field of reference - elements from other texts (theoretical and empirical) which are used in the production of the text. [126]

This model sees the extra-textual mirrored in the text as a re-presentation - something that did not exist before outside the text. The extra-textual field is disrupted because some elements are highlighted and others are deleted through selection by the researcher. Interpretations are thus the product of "social contexts of historically and culturally specific discourses".[127] The world within the text is a partial truth, "a transformation of the extra-textual world, rather than something wholly different from it".[128]

A hermeneutic approach would consider not only the relationship of the producer of the text to the other textual fields of reference, but also the relationship of the reader to the text for, as Duncan and Ley argue, "if you rule out the possibility of mimesis in the production then you can't assume it applies to the consumption of the text where the same processes are at work".[129] The reader understands a text by situating it within their own extra-textual and the inter-textual fields of reference. The world in the text is continually compared to the world that the reader understands outside the text in order to see what the text reveals about the world and as a 'test' of the plausibility of the text.[130] The result is a different interpretation of the text from that which the author intends, thereby extending the hermeneutic cycle. "As long as there are readers for a text" argue Duncan and Ley, "its reproduction will continue. In this sense, representation is not only a collective but also an iterative process".[131]

Clearly the hermeneutic position challenges the authority of authorship by denying a researcher's claims to be able to act objectively or produce transparent texts which are unproblematically consumed. Thus traditional metaphors, which were taken

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[126]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*, p.9.
[127]Duncan, J. and Duncan, N., 1988, "(Re)reading the landscape", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6, p.120.
[128]Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), 1993, *op cit.*, p.9.
[129]*Ibid.*, p.9.
[130]*Ibid.*

from the sciences and technology and depended on being able to approximate truth or reality, have been abandoned. For instance, spatial theory - a mechanistic model - drew upon widely shared languages of geometry and mathematics and yielded broad agreement of method and reportage.[132] New metaphors yield no such agreements, drawn as they are from areas of human activity which are "very consciously representational", forcing us to abandon our "innocence of representation".[133] One of the most widely employed metaphors by cultural geographers has been 'landscape as text'.

The notion of landscape as text bears a close relation to the hermeneutic approach by stressing textuality, intertextuality and reader reception. Duncan and Duncan applied insights from literary theory to the analysis of landscapes, arguing that texts and landscapes are in some respects similar. Literary theory "rejects the common-sense naturalisation of meaning as well as the historians' or critics' assumed competence in deciphering, decoding, or authenticating 'true' invariable meaning. It also proposes that texts are not 'innocent'. They are not transparent windows through which reality may be unproblematically viewed".[134] Further, in reading landscapes as texts we are engaged in re-reading it and re-making them. Texts or landscapes are not representations or reconstructions of the real world but can be symbolic without being referential, and are highly intertextual creations of the reader and product of the society that created them. "Text", argue Barnes and Duncan,

> is... an appropriate trope to use in analysing landscapes because it conveys the inherent instability of meaning, fragmentation or absence of integrity, lack of authorial control, polyvocality and irresolvable social contradictions that often characterise them.[135]

Thus layers of meaning in the landscape may be dissected and analysed. This technique has been endorsed by Winchester in her study of women's roles in the urban landscape

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[131]*Ibid.*, p.10.
[132]Cosgrove, D. and Domosh, M., 1993, "Author and authority - writing the new cultural geography", Duncan, J. and Ley, D. (eds), *Place/Culture/Representation*, Routledge, London and New York.
[133]*Ibid.*, p.31.
[134]Duncan, J. and Duncan, N., 1988, *op cit.*, p.118.
[135]Barnes, T.J. and Duncan, J.S. (eds), 1992, "Introduction", *Writing Worlds - Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, Routledge, London and New York, p.7.

and by Duncan in his study of the Kandyan Kingdom.[136] Peter Jackson has argued that the attention paid to the landscape-as-text metaphor has resulted in the neglect of visual interpretation, but as Cosgrove and Daniels argue, landscapes can be read across a variety of different media.[137] There is no reason why a landscape present in a painting cannot be treated as a text and be subject to the same purpose in enquiry. Regarding landscape as text opens up the possibility of using many different interpretative skills on a wide variety of sources - paintings, poems, folk tales, music, film and song as well the more traditional oral, archival and cartographic sources.[138] Yet there is a cautionary note to be sounded in the midst of this uninhibited plundering of previously ignored sources and it takes the form of a critique of the popular and much cited *The Iconography of Landscape*.[139]

The collection of essays which comprised *The Iconography of Landscape* sought to explicate more fully the status of landscape as image and symbol by using iconography, refined by Panofsky in the 1950s.[140] Iconography involves the identification of conventional, consciously inscribed symbols, for instance a lamb to signify Christ. Iconology is slightly different in that it attempts to excavate the intrinsic meaning of a work of art

> by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religion or a philosophical persuasion - unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work.[141]

Cosgrove and Daniels embraced this method in an attempt to lay emphasis on the significance of images in the analysis of landscape representation.[142] There are problems with the uncritical adoption of iconography and iconology as methods for geographers. First, these are methods applied strictly to Renaissance art by Panofsky, developed as a method because of the characteristic of Renaissance art to actively employ a range of

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136Winchester, H., 1992, *op cit.*; Duncan, J., 1990, *op cit.*
137Jackson, P., 1992, *op cit.*; Daniels, S. and Cosgrove, D., 1987, *op cit.*
138Cosgrove, D., 1989, *op cit.*
139Cosgrove D. and Daniels, S. (eds), *op cit.*
140Daniels, S. and Cosgrove, D., 1987, *op cit.*; Panofsky, E., 1970, *Meaning in Visual Arts*, Harmondsworth, Penguin. First published 1955.
141*Ibid.*, p.55.
142Cosgrove, D. and Jackson, P., 1987, *op cit.*

allegories, stories and motifs.[143] Thus iconography and iconology are predicated on the presumed tendency of Renaissance artists to self-consciously include artistic motifs linked to specific themes and concepts. Panofsky laid down two basic requirements if either method was to work. Iconography depended on the "correct identification of the motifs" whilst iconology required the "correct" analysis of images, stories and allegories.[144] In fact, iconography and iconology rely on precisely those issues of mimesis and claims to knowledge that cultural geographers have attempted to reject. The cautionary tale here is that geographer's cannot simply pick out methods from other disciplines. There must still be an element of caution in applying methods which are situated within the very historical and academic discourse which geographers hope to contest.

In fact, the essays in *The Iconography of Landscape* did not realise the methodological ambitions of the introductory essay and the overt use of iconography and iconology seems to have been abandoned even by the original editors of the collection. Instead an eclectic range of methods is now employed including a form of 'deconstruction' whereby texts are 'historicised' or 'unpacked' and nested within the contexts that historically surround them. This method has been employed in different essays by Duncan, Jackson, Jacobs and Winchester[145] in *Inventing Places*, whose editors point out that this is not deconstructionism in the strict Derridean sense. They argue that

> ...a range of techniques is appropriate, and often several may be used in concert to uncover the connections between visions, practices, and geographies. The task requires an equally diverse range of skills; a sensitivity to people's subjectivity, a keen eye to the topographies that people fashion, a conscientious contextualising of the connections between people and place, a commitment to rigorous documentation and plausible argumentation, and an honest confrontation with our values and the relativity of our own interpretations.[146]

All these things inform Daniels' *Fields of Vision*, in which he attempts to emphasise the "fluency of landscape, not its fixity, its poetics as well as its politics"

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[143]Panofsky, E., 1970, *op cit.*

[144]*Ibid.*

[145]These essays are Duncan, J., 1992, "Elite landscapes as cultural (re)productions: the case of Shaughnessy Heights"; Jackson, P., 1992, *op cit.*; Winchester, H., 1992, *op cit.*; Jacobs, J., 1992, "Cultures of the past and urban transformation: the Spitalfields Market redevelopment in East London". All these essays are in Anderson, K. and Gale, F. (eds), *op cit.*

whilst acknowledging that he has re-narrated these landscapes from the perspective of the late twentieth century.[147] In *Fields of Vision* Daniels reaffirms his commitment to narration as a method which was originally described in his "Arguments for a Humanistic Geography".[148] Narrative, he argued, might appeal to humanistic geographers, because it "explicates meaning through context and in the process mediates, or should mediate, the views of the 'outsider', the narrator, and those of the 'insider', the participants in the history the narrator constructs".[149] Daniels further argues that narratives conserve a more seamless sense of the fluency of relations between people and between people and place but do not seek to reproduce the flow of lived experience. They are, therefore, not lived but told. Narrative is the method by which I have chosen to research and write this thesis. The stories I tell about the Cotswolds are "explicated from the evidence of specific times and places" through a "dialectic of discovery and construction".[150] Where I describe my work in terms of journeys and stories I am drawing on common analogies to describe the specificity of a researcher's way of seeing and re-presenting the world. Cosgrove and Domosh show that such stories are not to be read as approximations of reality, but as tales - narratives - of how we have understood the world.[151]

Conclusion

I conclude by showing how the retheorising of landscape, culture and representation I have outlined above inform my own research on representations of the Cotswolds in fictional and non-fictional literature and other written media.

Matless proposes a way of considering representation which

> treats the image as neither significant of an essence nor reflective of a more basic reality; a way of operating which emphasises the image's substance, its substantive, power-sodden, moral, and aesthetic make-up. Representations,

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[146]Anderson, K. and Gale, F. (eds), 1992, *op cit.*, p.11.
[147]Daniels, S., 1994, *Fields of Vision - Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Polity Press.
[148]Daniels, S., 1997, "Arguments for a humanistic geography", Barnes, T. and Gregory, D. (eds), *Reading Human Geography - The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry*, Arnold.
[149]*Ibid.*, p.372.
[150]*Ibid.*, p.373.
[151]Cosgrove. D. and Domosh, D., 1993, *op cit.*

> images, knowledges and fantasies are suggested here as being highly concrete stuff, not to be regarded as merely reflective or distortive of the world... but as constitutive, as what the world is made of, really.[152]

This is precisely how I address my sources; not by suggesting that there is a 'reality' to which representations of the Cotswolds can be compared but by arguing that they themselves construct a place and set of places. I maintain a historical and contextual sensitivity by being constantly reminded that concepts do not "emerge unprompted from the minds of individuals or human groups".[153] An important part of this research involves critically interpreting texts, nesting them into historical contexts, attempting to establish and unpack the origins of ideas implicated in the imagery - in other words constructing narratives around them. To this end representations of the Cotswolds have been linked in this research to the construction of English national identity which, I would argue, provides one of the contexts in which representations of the Cotswolds can be understood. As Daniels has argued, "landscapes, whether focusing on single monuments or framing stretches of scenery, provide visible shape; they picture the nation".[154] I wish to achieve a sustained unpacking of the idea of Cotswolds and defamiliarise and deconstruct the constitution of the myth of the Cotswolds still active in our own "ideological crucible", drawing out the connections between "the imaginative geography of landscape and the imagined community of the nation".[155]

In this chapter I have situated my research in its theoretical and methodological contexts. The next chapter seeks to situate the research further in contemporary currents of thinking about England and Englishness and by reviewing extant work on the historical construction of English national identity.

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[152]Matless, D., 1992, "An occasion for geography: landscape, representation and Foucault's corpus", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, volume 10, p.44.
[153]Cosgrove, D., 1984, *op cit.*, p.2.
[154]Daniels, S., 1993, *op cit.*, p.5.
[155]The notion of an ideological crucible was used by Widdowson, P., 1994, Review of *Myths of the English*, *Ecumene*, 1 (3), p.313-315; Daniels, S., 1993, *op cit.*

Chapter Three

England's Autopsy

> It is a long time since we thought of England as a 'precious stone set in the silver sea' or even since we extolled its good fortunes... we are more likely nowadays to find ourselves performing an autopsy on it.[1]

In the course of research that concerns itself in part with the construction of English national identity I have often reflected on why the subject should be of such great academic and popular interest. Sensitised to the appearance of new articles and books on the subject, I have also noticed it popping up as the subject of seminars, courses and entire conferences. Early in 1995 *New Statesman and Society* produced an entire supplement entitled "England - Whose England?" containing a range of critical articles that held Englishness up for exclusively unfavourable scrutiny.[2] Slip the CD-ROM of any broadsheet into a computer and there will you find more than fifty articles in any one year which contest, explore, address and are informed by the notion of Englishness; more than one article a week for each broadsheet in 1994 and 1995. These are aspects of the popular and academic autopsy that Gervais refers to. But merely acknowledging the welter of new reflections on the subject only goes a little way to explaining why Englishness has been the object of such scrutiny. The purpose of this chapter is partly to answer this question by situating the research in broader intellectual currents and in particular to show how the studies of historical constructions of Englishness has their roots in contemporary disillusionment with English national identity. I will also highlight a significant gap in research on historical constructions of Englishness which this thesis addresses.

Why Should England Have My Bones?

> It is helpful, in a world whose values change so quickly, to be able to say, 'I am an Englishman'.[3]

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[1]Gervais, D., 1993, "Preface", *Literary Englands - Versions of 'Englishness' in Modern Writing*, Cambridge University Press., p.xiii.
[2]"England - Whose England?", 1995, a special supplement of *New Statesman and Society*, 24 February 1995, pp.26-39.
[3]White, T.H. 1981, *England Have My Bones*, Macdonald, Futura Publications, p.3. First published in 1936.

T.H. White wrote these words in his diary of 1934-5 *England Have My Bones* - a year of hunting, shooting and fishing only briefly interrupted by a couple of flying lessons. It was reissued nearly fifty years later in 1981 (not by accident, some might argue) and I as a reader find it not only unhelpful but absolutely divisive to say "I am an Englishman", or more accurately "I am an English woman" - and there are few who would uncritically accept White's view.[4] One of the reasons for this is that in our time 'Englishness' has become a theme for speculation rather than dogma.[5] When Gervais pointed out that "England is too problematic now to inspire simple patriotism",[6] his reviewer Bayley accused him of not going far enough, arguing instead that the cold blood of modern self-consciousness causes everyone to disassociate themselves from or even repudiate the label. "Being 'English'" he went on "even in postmodernists quotation marks, is one of those things that just aren't done".[7] As one young woman from Watford put it to journalist Ian Jack, "I'd almost prefer to be from somewhere else".[8] This attitude, according to the controversial article in *Wisden's Cricket Monthly* in 1995 (which questioned the loyalty of non-English cricketers), stems from a conspiracy to remove any sense of pride or sense of place in the hearts of those who are unequivocally English.[9] But others see this questioning of the power of English national identity as not only healthy but absolutely necessary to contest the way 'unequivocal Englishness' has been mobilised in the last decade and a half.

Nowhere was this more obvious than in the production of *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* in three volumes in the late 1980s. This lengthy collection of essays was derived from a 1984 History Workshop which itself resulted out of anger at the inability of the anti-war half of the nation to assert itself

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[4]Except perhaps, John Redwood who defined his Englishness as "a sense of well-being about English history , tradition, culture and language, England's role in the United Kingdom and the United Kingdom's role in the world". Macdonald, V., 1995, "Proud to be English, sorry to be a Vulcan", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 20 August 1995, no page number.
[5]Gervais, D, 1993, 'Frontispiece', *op cit.*
[6]Gervais, D., 1993, "Preface", *op cit.*, p.xiii.
[7]Bayley, J., 1994, "The Blight on Blighty - Lawrence, Larkin and the distastefullness of other people's Englands", *Times Literary Supplement*, January 21, 1994, p.3.
[8]Jack, I., 1995, "In pursuit of Englishness", *The Independent*, 9 July 1995, no page number. Newspaper articles taken from CD-ROM do not, unfortunately, include page numbers.
[9]*Ibid.*

during the Falklands war.[10] It was also predicated on the understanding that for three decades, nationality had been a "storm centre" of British politics. To Britain's decline as a world power were added the complications of New Commonwealth immigration, membership of the European Economic Community, Welsh and Scottish efforts for devolution, the north/south divide and the Irish Civil War - issues that still resonate in discussions about the meanings of Englishness and Britishness.[11] Samuel almost understates the case by arguing that "Nationality no longer belongs to the realm of the taken-for granted".[12] Thus, the purpose of the collection edited by Samuel was to bring patriotism within the province of rational explanation and historical enquiry by deconstructing the idea of nation and showing that the

> lines of national belonging, so far from being instinctual, were constantly being redrawn. Against the alleged continuities of national life we wanted to set the record of ruptures, reversals and negations. Against the supposed unities of national life we aimed to counterpose the evidence of diversity. The idea of nation had always been a contested one; at any given moment it had to compete with more immediate and ultimately more meaningful social bonds.[13]

It was, then, in Samuel's words, "The fragility of nationality in the present [that] provides a privileged optic for taking a new look at the seemingly monolithic unities of the past".[14] Some chapters in this collection will be examined later.

It is an additional measure of the critical interest in issues of national identity that two further major collection of essays were published between 1986 and 1993, making a total of three in seven years. These were Colls and Dodd's *Englishness - Politics and Culture 1880-1920* and *Space and Place - Issues of Identity and Location* edited by Carter, Donald and Squires.[15] Colls and Dodd labelled the collection of essays in *Englishness* "an act of dispossession" - a seemingly negative but nevertheless necessary

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[10]Samuel, R. (ed), 1989, "Preface", *The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity - Volume One History and Politics*, Routledge.
[11]Suzanne Moore has argued that the right dismisses these problems as "trifling matters brought up only by left wing traitors who feel guilty, even embarrassed by their own Britishness". Moore, S., 1995, "Flying the Flag of Convenience", *The Guardian*, July 20, 1995, p.5.
[12]Samuel, R. (ed), 1989, "Introduction: exciting to be English", *The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity - Volume One History and Politics*, Routledge, p.xix.
[13]Samuel, R., 1989, "Preface", *op cit., volume one*, p.xi.
[14]*Ibid.*, p.xv.

outcome of the attempt to examine previously unexamined aspects of national identity and release the diverse identities within England and Britain from "starvation and malformation".[16] The editors' conviction that examining the construction of Englishness in the past should have ramifications in the present is explained by their decision to focus on the period 1880 to 1920 - "We believe" they wrote, that it is within the shadow of that period, and its meanings, that we still live".[17] This volume of essays, which dealt with Englishness through unpacking its music, literature, landscape and political events, was also seen by its editors as a starting point - "a necessary prelude to another [volume] which might help to make an adequate identity for us all".[18] The prospect of achieving this uncharacteristically whimsical hope for a common identity is increasingly distant and unattractive. Suzanne Moore writing in *The Guardian* has argued that "those whose quest is for a common culture... have almost no way of conceptualising a common culture except nostalgically, as something that we used to have rather than something we may shape for the future".[19]

Space and Place also did not subscribe to the project of finding an adequate common identity. It drew together articles which questioned notions of identity and location and was predicated on the understanding that "the presumed certainties of cultural identity, firmly located in particular places which housed stable cohesive communities of shared tradition and perspective, though never a reality for some, were increasingly disrupted and displaced for all".[20] In "How English is it? Popular Literature and National Culture" Donald observes that the peculiarities of English culture have become an obsession amongst historians and cultural theorists and links this obsession to the era of Thatcherism and Reaganism.[21] He suspects that

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[15]Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), 1986, *Englishness - Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm; Carter, E., Donald, J., Squires, J. (eds), 1993, *Space and Place - Theories of Identity and Location*, Lawrence and Wishart.
[16]Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), 1986, "Preface", *op cit.*, no page number.
[17]*Ibid.*, no page number.
[18]*Ibid*, no page number.
[19]Moore, S., 1995, *op cit.*, p.5.
[20]Carter, E., Donald, J. and Squires, J. (eds), 1993, "Introduction", *op cit.*, p.vii.
[21]Donald, J., 1993, "How English is it? - popular literature and national culture", Carter, E., Donald, J. and Squires, J. (eds), *Space and Place - Theories of Identity and Location*, Lawrence and Wishart, pp.165-186.

> the repeated academic dissection of English nationalism... indicated an attempt to come to terms with the historical formation of English cultural criticism and exorcise (or disavow) its implication in the government of home and colonial populations

and points to Gilroy's theory that the 'morbid celebration' of Englishness can be attributed to the left's search for "an imagery in which to represent or even think political alternatives".[22]

Chambers picks up on this theme and identifies two perspectives and two versions of 'Britishness'. The first is Anglo-centric, frequently conservative, backward looking and increasingly located in a frozen, homogenous and largely stereotyped idea of the national culture. The second is heterogeneous, ex-centric, open-ended, and multi-ethnic. From the existence of these two (and possible other) conceptions of Britishness has emerged a populist politics of race and nation that attempts to make sense of national decline.[23] For Donald, Gilroy and others the way out of the impasse of the old politics may lie through "different, less historically contaminated ethnicities where collective identities are not constituted through nationality and nationalism but through community, locality and race.[24] Notwithstanding this, a preoccupation of new Labour under Tony Blair has undoubtedly been how to solve the conundrum thrown up by Thatcherism; how to thrive in Britain without being an English party too. This problem has arisen, argues Andrew Marr in the *Independent* because of the success of Thatcherism, "a particularly English movement" in proclaiming national rebirth. "British patriotism" he goes on

> came to seem a Tory thing, and an English thing, located most firmly in the south... A notion of Englishness based on hostility to Scottishness, or Welshness, or Irishness, might work for Conservatives; but it cannot work for this [Labour] party... because it implies an exclusive idea of Englishness which the left must abhor.[25]

This problem has been addressed in part by Tony Blair by the matching of John Major's "Middle England" with "Middle Income England" - an a-spatial description of

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[22]Donald, J., 1993, *op cit.*, p.165; Gilroy, P., 1987, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, London: Hutchinson, p.12.
[23]Chambers, I., 1993, "Narratives of nationalism - being British", Carter, E., Donald, J. and Squires, J. (eds), *Space and Place - Theories of Identity and Location*, Lawrence and Wishart, pp.145-164.
[24]James Donald, 1993, *op cit.*
[25]Marr, A., 1995, "Labour faces up to the English Question", *The Independent*, 21 March 1995, p.19.

the voters he wishes to attract whilst maintaining the traditional labour following in Scottish, Welsh and northern areas. It might also be addressed, as Andrew Marr points out, by adopting the generous idea of a "lighter, more diverse Englishness and a better Britishness that flows from it, founded on the continuous import and export of people, ideas and culture"[26] - the precise community-locality-race nexus advocated by Donald and Gilroy. It has been contested by those who believe, like Hall, that England is an all-embracing word which can mean England and Wales, Great Britain, the United Kingdom, or even the British Empire and that the survival of England and Englishness "may depend on restoring this image before it is too late".[27]

In this section I have established why Englishness and Britishness have become the subject of critical scrutiny in recent years. This has been, in part, a reaction to the loss of the empire, a tarnished monarchy, a run-down economy and "the down-sizing of Britain into a small player on a global stage". But it is also a reaction to the attempt of the Tory right to rally support around a notion of Englishness which embodies truth, freedom and wisdom through language, law and religion.[28] It is conceivable that academics' attempts to problematise contemporary Englishness and its historical roots are part of a wider project to redefine national identity or at least wrest it from Tory grasp by making it so intangible and problematic that it cannot be effectively mobilised to say anything useful for the right. But this has incurred an inevitable backlash and the ideological tug-of-war is going on at every level. For example, in 1995 Dr. Nick Tate, Chief Executive of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, called for a sense of British identity to be instilled in all school pupils regardless of ethnic background. In doing so he argued that pride in the nation's achievements had been denigrated by the "intelligentsia", which was largely responsible for engendering a sense of guilt about aspects of the past, particularly colonialism.[29] He further argued that

> those who take a relativist view of things feel you have to be apologetic about traditions, that all cultures are equal and none should be deemed greater than any

[26]*Ibid.*
[27]Hall, A., 1995, "English identity crisis as we wave Britannia adieu", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 29 January, 1995, no page number.
[28]Longford, E., 1995, "So Splendidly Endowed", *The Daily Telegraph*, January 7 1995, no page number.
[29]Petre, J., 1995, "Touch of class in lessons on 'citizenship'", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 23 July 1995, no page number.

> other. But if you are born into a particular cultural tradition that is very strong, you ignore it at your peril.[30]

This sally was received, according to one *Sunday Telegraph* columnist, with "squeaks of liberal outrage" but round approval from the right wingers, whilst others rounded on the "less than rigourous logic" that Tate displayed.[31] "Not for... Nick Tate the buzzwords of postmodernism" reflected Suzanne Moore in *The Guardian*,

> hybridity, diversity, fluidity... The liberal believes that a man, once stripped of his national and cultural identity, will become Everyman - citizen of the world. The conservative knows that, in fact, he will become bewildered, schizophrenic, unhappy and lonely. What we are seeing is the bewilderment and schizophrenia of those who feel that they are losing the argument... The stripping away of identity is in fact the creation of new identities... The fact that, by their very nature, these identities look forward rather than back seems to exclude them from conservative definitions of Englishness.[32]

Struggles over Englishness continue in the arts, music, film, sport and religion. The crown-church-state nexus - the old definition of Englishness argues Clifford Longley - has lost "its magic" despite the assertion of Archbishop of York, Dr. John Hapgood, that it is the purpose and duty of the Church of England to be at the heart of English culture.[33] Wright has observed that in 1994 "the symbolic mainstays of the British way of life seem to have been collapsing one after another into disheveled heaps. The monarchy fell hardest, but 1994 was hardly a brilliant year for the NHS, the Church, the police or the judiciary".[34] The view of England on offer in Gurinder Chadha's film *Bhaji on the Beach* challenges the hegemony of Merchant-Ivory in defining "Britain to the world - and to Britons" while Colin Nutley (director of *The Last Dance*, filmed in Blackpool) argues that "films like *Howards End* put an image to the world which I think is bullshit".[35]

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[30]Dr. Nick Tate quoted in *Ibid.*, no page number.
[31]Marrin, M., 1995, "Sunday Comment: Say 'No' to the trendies", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 23 July 1995, no page number; Suzanne Moore, 1995, *op cit.*, p.5.
[32]*Ibid.*, p.5.
[33]Longley, C., 1995, "Sacred and profane: gone is the magic of a proud nation", *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 July 1995.
[34]Wright, P., 1994, "Wrapped in the tatters of the flag", *The Guardian*, 31 December 1994, p.25.
[35]Johnston, S., 1994, "Greetings from Blackpool", *The Independent*, 19 August 1994, p25; Nutley, C., quoted in *Ibid.*

As numerous and interesting as these contemporary sites for debate and exploration of Englishness are, they are matched in the past by concomitant sites where England and Englishness was contested, constructed and imagined. It is to the contemporary examination of these historical sites that the next section turns.

"Who Talks of My nation?"

> What is my nation? Is a villain, and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal. What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?[36]

I will now turn to what Gray has called the "unravelling of English national culture itself"[37] and show how and with what success academics have attempted to shake off the "inherited mythologies which distort [the English's] perception of themselves and their relations with neighbouring peoples".[38] I am going to concentrate on the historical construction of Englishness here, work which recognises for the most part that individually and collectively held images of Englishness are already part of historical processes requiring examination. In a slightly different context, Laing has argued that what people think and feel about their lives and surroundings and how they experience and construct their national identity is not a matter of "direct and unmediated encounters between individuals and the material world, but rather a matter of construction of meanings through language and symbol, through the available stories and images circulating within their culture".[39] But asking how particular views of the English and Englishness have been consciously and unconsciously legitimated and perpetuated is no mean task, as Colls and Dodd's opening remarks in *Englishness - Politics and Culture* suggest:

> The English are an old nation and that there were (and are) critical phases in the long history of national consciousness is clear, but that these phases flowed simply one into another, or that the Englishness they produced stood for the same things, or that the English were (and are) a people with a resolved identity, is not. Englishness has

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[36]*Henry V*, Act 3, Scene 2, Lines 115-118.
[37]Gray, J., 1994, "Whatever happened to Englishness?", *Times Literary Supplement*, November 4, 1994, Number 4779, p.26.
[38]*Ibid.*, p.26.
[39]Laing, S., 1992, "Images of the rural in popular culture 1750-1990", Short, B. (ed), *The English Rural Community - Image and Analysis*, C.U.P.

> had to be made and re-made in and through history, within available practices and relationships and existing symbols and ideas. That symbols and ideas recur does not ensure that their meaning is the same. Meaning is not solely a property of genealogy, but a matter of present context and practical life.[40]

Nevertheless many have been willing to contribute something to England's autopsy by removing and dissecting various vital organs. I shall concentrate on three sites at which Englishness has historically been constructed and which have received particular contemporary attention; first, fictional and non-fictional literature; second work done on the construction of 'traditions' and symbols of England and third the landscape and its representation. I will concentrate on the period 1880 to 1950 as this is of most interest and relevance to this thesis.

It is important to note from the outset that the work I will be examining is itself implicitly or explicitly predicated on the thesis that the dominant discourse of Englishness in the period 1880 to 1950 was rural, based on what Bunce has called "a countryside ideal".[41] It is appropriate, then, to briefly examine the development of this thesis.

Constructing Rural England

In *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* Wiener proposed that the English nation became so ill at ease with the success of industrialisation that they chose to deny its legitimacy by adopting a conception of Englishness that virtually excluded industrialism. This persisted to form an "entrenched cultural syndrome" by the later years of Victoria's reign which stressed stability, closeness to the past and non-materialism - an "English way of life" which was widely accepted.[42] Best encapsulated in rustic imagery, it stressed non-industrial, non-innovative and non-material qualities. Wiener has demonstrated that the reasons for the persistent hostility to industrial advance and the rural myth-making that resulted from

[40]Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), 1986, "Preface", *op cit.*, no page number.
[41]Bunce, M., 1994, *The Countryside Ideal*, Routledge.
[42]Wiener, M., 1982, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*, Cambridge University Press, pp.5-7.

this hostility lie in the peculiar pattern of nineteenth century British social history. The end result of the nineteenth century transformation of Britain was a peaceful accommodation but one that "entrenched premodern elements within the new society and gave legitimacy to antimodern sentiments" - the cultural consequences of which would only become apparent in the twentieth century.[43]

Wiener's thesis is not without problems. One of these is the way he uses British and English interchangeably - a surprisingly common error which is compounded by his use of the southern and northern metaphors of the nation. In his chapter on "The English Way of Life" he suggests that "we might follow Horne and speak of two competing metaphors for the nation, 'Northern' and 'Southern'" and proceeds to quote the characteristics of both.[44] However, Horne's metaphors are for *Britain*, not *England*; Horne's argument that "in both metaphors it was assumed that *Britain is best*, but in the contest as to what Britain was best *at* it was, on the whole, the Southern Metaphor than won" (original italics) speaks to the synonymousness of Britain and England and therein a presumed superiority of England over the other component nations of Britain.[45]

Wiener's explanation for the rise of a dominant rural discourse in conceptions of England and Englishness has engendered some detailed examinations of this discourse's changing form and gradual popularisation. Howkins, for instance, has shown that a strain emerged within English politics and ideas in the 1880s which linked the rural to a general crisis to urban society.[46] The difference between Howkins' and Wieners' theses is one of emphasis. Whilst Wiener argues that the decline of the industrial spirit is explained by a "cultural containment of industrial capital", Howkins proposes that economic decline created a new image of both urban and rural England which by 1914 had spread "far across English art, and letter, music and architecture, producing a ruralist vision of a specifically English culture".[47]

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[43]*Ibid.*
[44]*Ibid.*, p.41.
[45]Horne, D., 1969, *God is an Englishman*, Angus and Robertson, p.22.
[46]Howkins, A., 1986, "The discovery of rural England", Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), *Englishness - Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm, pp.62-88.
[47]Wiener, M., 1982, *op cit.*, p.15; Howkins, A., 1986, *op cit.*, p.63.

Bunce also takes on Wiener's broad thesis but demonstrates unacceptable presentism by arguing that "the idealisation of the countryside was an inevitable consequence of the urban-industrial revolution".[48] This resulted in profound changes in society, economy and landscape causing turmoil and instability - effects which Wiener specifically argued did not occur. Bunce also privileges the "very nature of modern urbanism" over industrialisation to explain the idealisation of the countryside.[49] Urbanism, he suggests

> established four basic conditions for the nurturing of the countryside ideal. It produced the social structures and experiences within which attitudes towards the country and the city could develop. It created a political economy which redefined rural-urban relationships. It sustained the intellectual and cultural climate in which ideas about the country and the city could flourish. And, finally, it forged the landscapes and living environments around which different values have formed.[50]

There are then, broad similarities between Wiener, Howkins and Bunce who all point to the effects of industrial and urban change to explain the rise of the rural as the dominant discourse of Englishness in the late nineteenth century. Wiener and Howkins in particular conceptualise these changes through the notion of the South Country.

The South Country and its Limitations

The notion of the South Country is familiar to anyone who has read Howkins' "The Discovery of Rural England" and Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* and I wish only briefly to rehearse their arguments to lay the basis of my alternative idea which will be developed through the thesis.

Howkins traces the idea of a *South Country* back to Edward Thomas who, in 1908, broadly identified it as Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and parts of Somerset - counties encompassing a uniform landscape type of smooth, bare, rolling hills dotted with woodlands.[51] However, this South Country lost

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[48]Bunce, M., 1994, *op cit.*, p.10.
[49]*Ibid.*, p.11.
[50]*Ibid.*, p.11.
[51]Howkins, A., 1986, *op cit.*

its "real" existence in the sense that Thomas meant it to be replaced by what Howkins calls "yardsticks of rurality" by which the observer judged landscape. Howkins is suspiciously vague about what these yardsticks were, but points out that Shropshire's inclusion in the elastic South Country was a result of its "half timbering, village greens and hedgerows".[52]

Wiener's use of the northern and southern metaphors for the nation have reinforced Howkins' use of the South Country by implicitly excluding northern landscapes from conceptions of Englishness, even though these metaphors made no specific reference to landscape type.[53] Chase used both Howkins and Wiener to support an argument about the construction of Englishness in non-fictional rural writing in the inter-war years. Chase refers to the "threatened landscape of the South" - its symbolic status emphasised by that capital S - and argued that "it has been pointed out in this collection and elsewhere, how this gently undulating green, and unsevere landscape dominated the conception of the ideal England".[54] He supports this argument by reference to the Face of Britain series of Batsford books which, he claims, concentrated on southern landscapes. Recently the idea of the South Country informed a Channel 4 documentary on rural England and Englishness in which Lowerson argued that "the Englishness being offered [in rural writing from the interwar years] is a southern Englishness, its the land south and west of Watford".[55]

The South Country thus describes an ideal landscape broadly based on a topographic type and some ill-defined yardsticks of rurality that those participating in the "discovery" of rural England went in search of, imagined, constructed and recreated. As I will show, the Cotswolds sit uncomfortably within this argument. The area does not always fulfil the vague topographical ideal as Howkins and Chase have defined it but could be held up as an ideal version of England. This is not to suggest that the rural landscapes were not an important idiom for representing national identity but rather that the South Country homogenises English landscape and denies that in geographical

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[52]*Ibid.*, p.64.
[53]Wiener, M., 1981, *op cit.*
[54]Chase, M., 1989, "This is no claptrap, this is our heritage", Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Manchester University Press, p.143.
[55]Lowerson, J., 1991, speaking on "Deep England", Channel 4 narrated by Alan Bennet.

imaginations England could be found everywhere it was felt to be. Thus, many *different* rural landscapes were constitutive of the nation, their only shared characteristic being that they were lightly populated and cultivated 'middle landscapes'. This phrase, used by Cosgrove,[56] describes not only a topographical space between city and wild mountains, but a middle condition in which people, work and settlements are seen to be in harmony with their surroundings. I will develop this argument further in the next two chapters. For the rest of this section I wish to examine other research on the construction of Englishness beginning with the role of fictional and non-fictional writing.

Lie Back and Think of England's Literature

The making and remaking of English identity and the national culture in the later years of the nineteenth century were characterised by "complex and overlapping processes of invention, transformation and recovery"[57] - processes in which fictional and non-fictional writing played an important part. Despite this there are few wide-ranging discussions of fictional works which take account of their context - Cunningham's *British Writers of the Thirties* and Williams' *The Country and the City* and *Culture and Society* being exceptions.[58] Cavaliero's potentially interesting *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel 1900-1939* disappoints because it offers interpretations of central texts in linguistic isolation - although admittedly Cavaliero seeks to do no more than this, concerned as he his with the novelist's methodological approach to their material.[59] Similarly there are only a few authors who have attempted to review the role of non-fictional writing in shaping discourses of Englishness - the exception being Bunce who briefly deals with the role of non-fictional rural writing in creating English and American countryside ideals.[60] Apart from this, Keith's argument that "non-fictional rural prose should be recognised as a distinct tradition that deserves our serious attention" has, it

[56]Cosgrove, D., 1993, "Landscapes and myths, gods and humans", Bender, B. (ed), *Landscape - Politics and Perspectives*, Berg Publishers.
[57]Dodd, P., 1986, "Englishness and the national culture", Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), *Englishness - Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm, p.1.
[58]Cunnigham, V., 1988, *British Writers of the Thirties*, Oxford University Press. Williams, R., 1993, *The Country and the City*, The Hogarth Press. First published 1973. Williams, R., 1993, *Culture and Society*, The Hogarth Press. First published 1958. See also Brooker, P. and Widdowson, P., 1986, "A literature for England", Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), *Englishness - Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm, pp.116-163.
[59]Cavaliero, G., 1977, "Preface", *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel 1900-1939*, Macmillan.

seems, largely fallen on deaf ears, though certainly non-fictional writing is increasingly used as a rich primary source.[61] Notwithstanding these absences, this section reviews work which has considered the role of fictional and non-fictional writing in constructing a dominant discourse of Englishness between 1880 and 1950 and is loosely constructed around two questions posed by Donald about the invention and imagining of Englishness, which I have modified slightly. The first of these asks "what is the role of literature in the institutional formation of the 'national culture'" and the second is "what is the role of literature in shaping our perception and experience of identity and difference?"[62]

Donald himself has pointed out that the institution of Literature is constructed to contain the tensions inherent in the concepts of 'the nation', 'the people', and 'culture'. "Retrospectively" he argues "it provides the criteria for selecting certain texts as 'the canon' of English literature, as the history of 'England' given imaginative expression".[63] He goes on to point out that the concept of a constructed Literature is linked to nationality "less through mechanisms of expression than through the discourses and the institutions that produce 'nation', 'literature' and 'people' - and so 'Englishness' - as effective social categories". Dodd corroborates this by pointing out that past cultural activities and attributes were acknowledged as contributions to the evolution of the English national culture and that this was achieved, in part, through the establishment of a national literary tradition within the emergent discipline of English literature.[64] He has argued that

> A great deal of the power of the dominant version of Englishness during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century lay in its ability to represent both itself to others and those others to themselves.[65]

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[60]Bunce, M., 1994, *op cit.*
[61]Keith, W.J., 1975, *The Rural Tradition - William Cobbett, Gilbert White, and other non-fictional prose writers of the English Countryside*, The Harvester Press Ltd, p.5-6. Non-fictional rural writing has featured as a primary source particularly by David Matless in, for example, his 1992 paper "Regional surveys and local knowledges: the geographical imagination in Britain, 1918-1939, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17, pp.464-480. See also Chase, M., 1989, *op cit.*; Conford, P. (ed), 1988, *The Organic Tradition - an anthology of writings on Organic Farming, 1900-1950*, Green Books.
[62]Donald, J., 1993, *op cit.*, p.166.
[63]*Ibid.*, p.166.
[64]Dodd, P., 1986, *op cit.*
[65]*Ibid.*, p.2.

Crucial to this project was being able to say what national culture *had been* as well as what it was and Dodd argues that literature played a part between 1880 and 1920 in stabilising the conviction that English culture was rooted in and evolved from the past (an aspect of the "English way of life" also identified by Wiener). Howkins is in broad agreement with this thesis, although he refines the argument by pointing out that the recent past was defined as un-English by writers like G.K. Chesterton and Cecil Sharp because it was dominated by metropolitanism which had erected a set of values unnatural to the English people.[66] A more palatable definition of England was to be found, in the view of Sharp and J.A. Froude, in "Tudor England" - a construction based on the later years of the reign of Elizabeth I, lasting until the 1880s. "The Tudor construction was an extraordinarily powerful one" says Howkins

> ...it encouraged expansion and worldliness. Its heroes were adventurers rather than knights, its physical setting was idyllic without the harshness of monasticism. Above all it was English... The Tudor world was firmly rural.[67]

Howkins thus sees both literature and history as playing complementary roles in the institutional formation of the national culture by promoting the past as the site of an ideal English culture and society (a theme I explore in detail in chapter six). This theme is picked up by Brooker and Widdowson who argue that an English literary tradition (constructed around Shakespeare) was central to shaping a past capable of maintaining the "rhetorical forms" and "sentimental culture" necessary to patriotic nationalism.[68] And although patriotic nationalism itself was far from homogenous - embracing both declamatory, uplifting patriotism as well as non-aggressive forms - Brooker and Widdowson identify the dominant form as largely non-militaristic; invested in ideas of the national character, its traditions and a unifying love of the country. This was supported not only by a literary tradition from the past but also by contemporary writing where "pastoral retreat is blended with nostalgic lament".[69] Martin Wiener has shown, for instance, that Thomas Hardy's Wessex was taken to its heart by the public as a rural

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[66]Howkins, A., 1986, *op cit.*
[67]*Ibid.*, p.71.
[68]Brooker, P. and Widdowson, P., 1986, *op cit.*, p.118.
[69]Wiener, M., 1982, *op cit.*, p.52.

haven from contemporary life but also appealed because its ruralness was "of a piece with the national past".[70] Brooker and Widdowson argue that a

> ...sentimental love of the mother-country, particularly when traced to recollections of youth and perceptions of rural England, proves central to expressions of Englishness in the literature of the period".[71]

In particular, they identify a collusion between aestheticism, the literary pastoral, patriotism and the construction of a myth of rural England bound up with a "mystical notion of the land and a nostalgia for the traditional rural community centred on the country house or great estate".[72] This was exemplified by Constance Holme's *The Lonely Plough* and by writers such as John Galsworthy, E.M. Forster and D.H. Lawrence.[73] Thus, Booker and Widdowson emphasise the development of a literary style in the country-house novel - informed by a range of artistic, literary and political themes - and the deliberate construction of a literary tradition as the most important contribution of literature to imagining national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Bunce stresses poetry's role in nourishing and reinforcing the mental images of the countryside and fabricating the mythology and romanticism within which nostalgic sentiment flourished. This poetry was part of a strong rural poetic tradition with its roots in the Thoecritan *Idylls* and Virgilian *Eclogues*.[74] Perhaps Bunce over-emphasises the continuity of a pastoral form which stretches from ancient Greece to the twentieth century, particularly in light of his insistence elsewhere that the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a product of specific and radical social and economic changes. Nevertheless he makes a number of valuable points about how non-fictional rural writing helped to foster an idyllic image of the countryside. This sort of writing, argued Bunce, developed when natural history emerged as a branch of literature in the early eighteenth century. From John Ray at the end of the seventeenth century to Gilbert White at the end of the eighteenth, nature study was seen as "intellectually

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[70] *Ibid.*, p.52.
[71] Brooker, P. and Widdowson, P., 1986, *op cit.*, p.117.
[72] *Ibid.*,p.133.
[73] *Ibid.*, p.133-34.
[74] Michael Bunce, 1994, *op cit.*

rewarding, spiritually edifying and aesthetically gratifying".[75] Writers interested in outdoor recreation and country living shifted the emphasis of non-fictional rural writing to more personal engagements with nature - most powerfully exemplified in Bunce's view by Richard Jefferies. Bunce goes on to argue that

> During the Edwardian and inter-war years the kind of intimate celebration of the nature of the English countryside which characterised Jefferies' writing was a central element in the recurrent rural nostalgia of the period.[76]

Bunce maintains that the very intent of this literary genre was to inspire enthusiasm for nature - but his own list of authors pursuing this style exposes the simplicity of this assertion. Citing W.H. Hudson, Edward Thomas, Henry Williamson, H.J. Massingham, H.E. Bates, A.G. Street and Adrain Bell as some of the main literary naturalists Bunce picks out some of the most vociferous and polemic authors of the inter-war period. To argue that "this was a literature written principally for an urban market [which] served to heighten its sense of escapism" is to underestimate the political intent behind some of these author's writings. Certainly Massingham's books about the Cotswolds cannot be dismissed in this way as will become clear in this thesis.

Chase uses non-fictional rural writing as the basis of his "emotional geography' of the inter-war years, and suggests that many of the authors that Bunce names were engaged in "the pursuit of a hidden agenda: ultra-conservative in its implications, and profoundly reactionary in its social philosophy".[77] The "hidden agenda" was to address the problems of agricultural depression, the break up of great estates and the subsequent loss of social and moral control over rural people who would be subject to the vagaries of progress and modernity - in other words a manifesto for "private property and the paternalistic ethic".[78]

Matless shows how the travel writing of Vaughan Cornish and H.V. Morton contributed to a "collective" definition of England and also provided a means of

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[75]Thomas, K., 1983, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, London, Allen Lane, p.283.
[76]*Ibid.*, p.46.
[77]Chase, M., 1989, *op cit.*, p.129.
[78]*Ibid.*, p.132.

expression for their wider philosophical and social views within a discourse on landscape.[79] Cunningham adds that "much of the '30s exploration of England persisted in linking exploring England with discovering rurality" in non-fictional writing that was "aggressively and squirearchically up-market and blood-sporting Anglican... [and] neurotically hostile to the spreading rash of the town, the encroachment of industrial, mechanical man by ribbon development along arterial roads".[80] Bunce thus over-simplifies things by pointing out that "nature... when set in the cosy landscapes of lowland England, served to define much of the essence of the countryside ideal, and indeed of the national character as a whole"[81] - this understates the political agenda of those who sought to define the national character by reference to a specific view of nature and the countryside in the interwar period. It further overlooks the place of such debates in a much broader discourse of national identity in which questions of culture and race were central. Potts argues that there was a very prominent political objective in the countryside description of the inter-war years - "the definition of a lovely Englishness". For some time, he maintains,

> it had been commonplace to view the country as the repository of the deep-lying values that had made England truly great. But where this idea began to play a prominent role in late nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalism... the notion of race and stock was paramount.[82]

In his broad overview of popular culture Strinati traces the rise of mass culture theory as a response to the industrialisation and commercialisation of popular culture on a grand scale. This, he argues, was a process which gathered momentum in the 1920s and 1930s and depended on a mass audience and mass production techniques.[83] Of particular concern to observers in the 1930s were the characteristics of the audience of mass produced cultural products. They were perceived as

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[79]Matless, D., 1988, "Seeing England with Morton and Cornish: travel writing and a quest for order" Heffernan, M. and Gruffudd, P. (ed), *'A Land Fit for Heroes': Essays in the Human Geography of Inter-War Britain*, Loughborough University Department of Geography Occasional Paper No. 14, pp.110-129.
[80]Cunningham, V., 1988, *op cit.*, p.230.
[81]Bunce, M., 1994, *op cit.*, p.47.
[82]Potts, A., 1989, "'Constable Country' between the wars", Samuel, R. (ed), *Patriotism - The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume Three: National Fictions*, Routledge, p.166.
[83]Strinati, D., 1995, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, Routledge.

> passive consumers, prone to the manipulative persuasions of mass media, submissive to the appeals to buy mass produced commodities made by mass culture, supine before the false pleasures of mass consumption, and open to the commercial exploitation which motivates mass culture.... abandoning all critical hope.[84]

Strinati points to the work of Mrs. Q.D. Leavis as showing particular concern with threat that mass-produced novels posed to "high-brow" literature. Leavis also feared that the position of the elite intellectual as an arbiter of cultural taste was threatened with democratisation by mass culture. These issues are further examined by Greenslade who points out that the city dweller as a blight on civilisation was a key tenet for the degenerationist frame of mind in the inter war years.[85] Such a figure was symbolically constructed in discussions of racial decline by those "hostile to new forms of mass media for predominantly urban consumption and to their perceived effect of the imagination and the sensibility of the urban population".[86] Gloversmith has focused on the work of J.C. Powys, Clive Bell, R.H. Tawney and T.S. Eliot in his chapter on "Defining Culture" in *Class, Culture and Social Change*, arguing that these four authors shared a grave fear of social change on a large scale, reflected by "their backward looking apologias, and their strictures on cultural disintergration".[87] Gloversmith is highly critical of this position, pointing out that

> What they are blind to are the advances in the larger self-knowledge of mankind, the enlargement of consciousness and moral conscience that fundamentally strengthens civilisation. Provincial and parochial definitions of other terms, culture and civilisation, are actual hindrances to the practising and the valuing of the full, free human interchange between individuals and groups whose potentialities are unconstrained, the dichotomies destroyed.[88]

The striking feature of recent work on both fictional and non-fictional literature is its focus on the 1930s. The work of Gloversmith, Greenslade and Cunningham form a part of this intellectual attention which also extends, in Gloversmith's edited volume, to the role of British intellectuals on the popular front, Mass Observation, British art, women's roles between the wars and the political culture of the Communist party as well

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[84]*Ibid.*, p.12.
[85]Greenslade, W., 1994, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel - 1880-1940*, Cambridge University Press.
[86]*Ibid.*, p.241.
[87]Gloversmith, F. (ed), 1980, "Defining culture: J.C. Powys, Clive Bell, R.H. Tawney and T.S. Eliot", *Class, Culture and Social Change - A New View of the 1930s*, The Harvester Press, p.43.

as the battle for the countryside.[89] The inclusion of the latter reminds us that thinking and writing about rural England was situated in a broader discourse of national identity.

In his introductory remarks, Gloversmith observes that "there has been a burst of new writing, proliferating, asserting and counter-asserting, qualifying. There was no longer - if there ever had been - one single image of a lost decade".[90] Cunningham agrees, pointing out that "if we think of the '30s as a seamless political whole we are grossly distorting them".[91] This could be accounted for by academic fashion; where the Edwardian England once commanded attention, now the 1930s are a favoured theme.[92] Yet Chase's argument that "writing about rural England and seeing in it all the essential qualities of Englishness, arguably reached a climax in the years 1930-45" is not without foundation.[93] Furthermore, interest in the 1930s does not appear to be diminishing. In a new source book on national identity *Writing Englishness, 1900-1950* there are no fewer than 25 extracts from the 1930s compared to only 15 for the 1940s and a miserly 14 each for 1910-1919 and 1920-1929. The decade 1900-1909 is represented by six extracts.[94]

I began this section with two questions about the role of literature in the institutional formation of the national culture and in shaping our perception and experience of identity and difference. It should be clear that both non-fictional and fictional writing has played a crucial role in each of these. The institution of literature has received more overt attention for the period 1880 to 1920 than the interwar years during which time its role in containing the tensions inherent in the concepts of "the nation" and "culture" has broken down, leading to wide-ranging debate on and lack of consensus about what these concepts meant. Both non-fictional and fictional works

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[88]*Ibid.*, p.43.
[89]The essays mentioned here are Coombes, J., "British intellectuals and the Popular Front"; Stuart Laing, "Presenting 'Things as They Are': Sommerfield, J., *May Day* and Mass Observation"; Mellor, D., "British art in the 1930s: some economic, political and cultural structures"; Lewis, J., "In search of equality: women between the wars"; Howkins, A., "Class against class: The political culture of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1930-1935"; Lowerson, J., "The Battle for the Countryside". All in Gloversmith, F. 1980, (ed), *Class, Culture and Social Change - A New View of the 1930s*, The Harvester Press.
[90]Gloversmith, F., (ed), 1980, "Foreword", *Ibid.*, p.12.
[91]Cunningham, V., 1988, *op cit.*, p.33.
[92]Gloversmith, F. (ed), 1980, "Foreword", *op cit.*
[93]Chase, M., 1989, *op cit.*, p.128.

were grappling with identity and difference, bringing to the fore grave concerns about the condition of the country and the character of her people. Although the 1920s an 1940s sneak into the frame at either end of the '30s, there is a significant lack of work on the literature of these decades which takes account of its cultural context in quite the same depth as the work reviewed here.

Bunce has argued, perhaps rightly, that, although much has been written about the idealisation of the countryside, this has been

> dominated by the relatively narrow and specialised perspectives of literary and intellectual history... Our attitudes to the countryside therefore tend to be understood largely in terms of their literary and artistic expression and in the articulation of ideas about the country and the city by great thinkers. Yet it is an ideal which has grown beyond its cultural and philosophical origins into the realms of popular and tangible expression in the actual landscapes and living spaces of modern society.[95]

With this in mind, the next section looks at work on the 'traditions' and 'symbols' of Englishness - what Porter has called "the myths of the English".

The Role of Tradition in Discourses of England

This section focuses on work which has examined the role of traditional figures or practices in creating and maintaining English national identity or character. This is an area which has received only a small amount of attention when compared to the other subjects being discussed here, but it is never the less important. As Wright has argued "Cultural manipulation pervades contemporary British society - not least in endless public invocations of the national identity and tradition".[96] Whilst this is certainly not a claim can be exclusively made for Britain alone, acknowledging that national identity can be constructed and invented has allowed the view that aspects of England's cultural heritage might also be mythological constructs. However this has been realised in different ways. Two books - Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) and Wright's *On Living in an Old Country* (1985) - take different views of the

[94]Giles, J. and Middleton, T., 1995, *Writing Englishness, 1900-1950*, Routledge.
[95]Bunce, M., 1994, *op cit.*, p.2.

role of traditions in constructing and maintaining discourses of national identity.[97] Hobsbawm attacks the implied historical continuity of traditions, arguing instead that traditions which claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.[98] Traditions - which feature a ritual or symbolic function - are invented through "a process of formalisation and ritualisation characterised by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition".[99] Hobsbawm further argues that the invention of tradition takes places more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, with the result that "instant formalisations of new traditions" cluster in the last 200 years.[100]

There is much to question in Hobsbawm's thesis, not least the implication that 'old' traditions are somehow more authentic than recent 'invented' ones, demonstrated where Hobsbawm speaks unproblematically of "a traditional *topoi* of genuine antiquity".[101] Further, this view of traditions as invented assumes their passive consumption - an aspect which Wright cannot accept. He points out that "no value can remain to critical analysis which has to define people as passive (if not always totally stupefied)" and goes on

> What is the actual basis for the nation in contemporary experience and how can the forms of self-understanding which it promotes come to be shared by people of strikingly different situation and circumstance? I ask this question with specific regard to the sense of history, tradition and cultural identity which plays such an influential part in the British national imagination.[102]

For Wright, a vernacular and informed sense of history in the everyday lives of the British finds a forceful public expression in stately displays of tradition and national identity - the power of which is diminished by the argument that traditions are merely invented. Samuel is more explicit in his criticism and offers some explanation for why the role of traditions and symbols in the construction of national identity has been

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[96]Wright, P., 1988, *On Living in an Old Country*, Verso, p.5.
[97]Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds), 1983, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press; Wright, P., 1988, *op cit.*
[98]Hobsbawm, E., 1983, "Introduction: inventing traditions", Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds), 1983, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, pp.1-14.
[99]*Ibid.*, p.4.
[100]*Ibid.*, p.4.
[101]*Ibid.*, p.7.

somewhat overlooked. Where Hobsbawm constructs his argument around national 'institutions' like the monarchy and the F.A. cup final, Samuel introduces the figures of national myth to the debate. He argues that allegorical figures are "an inescapable element of patriotism itself, and, indeed, since the very idea of nation belongs to the symbolic order... it is difficult to see how it can be discussed without them".[103] Nevertheless sociologists and in particular historians have eschewed critical commentary or research on the national character and figures of national myth. Indeed, Samuel seems to have changed his own position on this. In *Theatres of Memory* he argues that the invention of tradition is a process rather than an event and that memory is something that is made by people for themselves. Rather than focusing on state theatricals or the figures of national myth, Samuel suggests that it would be more profitable to focus on the "discriminations of everyday life".[104]

Historians have received some especially pointed criticism from Samuel (himself a historian) who claims, perhaps unfairly, that the first instinct of the historian is to look for the reality content of images and attempt to translate myths and metaphors into empirically verifiable terms. Rationality makes historians wary of anything which has "the taint of the superstitious or the childish - a charge to which the figures of national myth are peculiarly vulnerable".[105] Although Samuel calls Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* "the most influential recent work in the field of popular imagery", he is nevertheless disappointed with it, clearly feeling that it is a systematic attempt to demolish the myths of national identity and is symptomatic of historians' unease with the subject.[106] Establishing the provenance of symbols, rituals or traditions does not account for their pervasive and important imaginative appeal and their subsequent and continuous mutations.[107]

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[102]Wright, P., 1988, *op cit.*, p.5.
[103]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction: The figures of national myth", *Patriotism - The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume Three: National Fictions*, Routledge, p.xxiii.
[104]Samuel, R., 1994, *op cit.*, p.17.
[105]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction", op cit., volume three, p.xxix.
[106]*Ibid.*, p.xxviii-xxix; Daniels, S., 1991, "Envisioning England", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 17, 1, pp.95-99.
[107]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction", *op cit., volume three*; Daniels, S., 1991, *op cit.*

Offering an example pertinent to my own research Samuel examines the various incarnations of the "freeborn Englishman". In the pastoral version of the national myth he appears variously as "a study yeoman, jovial blacksmith, hardy peasant, peaceful shepherd, the roving young blade, a countryman enjoying the freedom of the open air and living in a state of liberty and independence".[108] In melodrama he is the honest labourer; in music hall the easy going cockney; a rake in the eighteenth century and a proletarian hero in the nineteenth. What is important, and what Hobsbawm and Ranger overlook, is that "ideologically these figures have multiple significations, being subject to rival or contradictory interpretations. They are also quite chameleon-like, being adopted now in a radical sense, now in a conservative one, and changing their meaning over time".[109]

Equally pervasive is the image of the home of the freeborn Englishman - at home in rural England which the English, as Ian Jack points out, see plainly as a myth but one that has "stubbornly persisted through a world war, the loss of the empire, immigration, and the near collapse of every important national institution".[110] The idea of a golden age or rural idyll is, for Wright, more appropriately termed a "nostalgia" rather than a tradition, which speaks to "the constrained condition of everyday life" but which draws upon the image of already destroyed traditional and deeply settled communities.[111] In this sense, nostalgia for tradition is the important element in constructing a national self image and identity, as I argue in chapter six.

In a final criticism of Hobsbawm and Ranger, Samuel points out that

> In its preference for 'brief and dateable' periods, the 'invention of tradition' allows little conceptual space for those more molecular and subterranean processes in which imaginative complexes form.[112]

This is a criticism that might also be levelled at Porter's *Myths of the English*. Initially this edited volume of essays looked as if it might approach an answer to the tantalising

[108]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction", *op cit.*, *volume three*, p.xxxi.
[109]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction", *op cit.*, *volume three*, p.xxxi.
[110]Jack, I., *op cit.*, no page number.
[111]Wright, P., 1988, *op cit.*, p.20.
[112]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction", *op cit.*, *volume three*, p.xxix.

question of how the meaning of traditions and symbols is generated and maintained. All the essays deal with "institutions or types which, alongside their everyday, bread and butter history, radiate meanings and mythologies supportive of the English way of life".[113] In order to "enhance our historical understanding", such questions must be asked of these cultural myths as "how are meanings generated" and "whence does intellectual authority arise?".[114] However, Widdowson grumbles that the essays on such various subjects as Gilbert and Sullivan, Mother Goose, bonfire night, the tramp and the English bobby, fail to fulfill this potential - although in this list of subjects the book does reflect an intriguing mix of mythic 'types' as well as institutions and events. "The majority [of the essays]" claims Widdowson "are little more than descriptive accounts of odd areas of personal interest... a number of essays make scant, if any, connection with the notion of 'Englishness' and its cultural/mythic construction".[115] In failing to deliver, Porter's collection reflects a broader gap in the literature which has yet to be filled by a work which offers a "radically modern historiography 'defamiliarising' and 'deconstructing' the construction of myths still active in our own ideological crucible".[116]

In his broad critique of historians' approaches to national identity, Samuel points out that they have been indifferent to symbolic landscapes, "that 'sacred geography' which enters so largely into idealisations of national character.[117] It is to the consideration of work that has not been indifferent to this 'sacred geography' that this chapter now turns.

Landscape and English National Identity

> One icon of heritage has a distinctly English cast. That is the landscape. Nowhere else does the term suggest not simply scenery and *genres de vie*, but

[113]Porter, R. (ed), 1993, "Introduction" *Myths of the English*, Polity Press, p.4.
[114]*Ibid.*, p.4.
[115]Widdowson, P., 1994, Book Review of *Myths of the English Ecumene*, vol 1, no.3, p.313.
[116]*Ibid.*, p.315. One little known character from the Daily Express cartoons in the 1930s has been the subject of an article by Rod Brookes who has examined the particular version of national identity produced and reproduced in Sidney Strube's of the Little Man. Brookes, R., 1990, "'Everything in the Garden is Lovely': The representation of national identity in Sidney Strube's *Daily Express* cartoons in the 1930s", *The Oxford Journal*, 13(2), pp.31-43.
[117]Samuel, R., 1989, "Introduction", *op cit.*, *volume three*, p.xii.

quintessential national virtues.[118]

There is no shortage of output on the concept of landscape. In a recent review essay Driver noted that it had been "aestheticised by art historians, designed by architects, managed by planners, modeled by urban theorists, interpreted by cultural historians, excavated by archaeologists, mapped by geographers and textualised by poststructuralists".[119] However, I am interested in this section in work that has looked at the relationship between landscape and English national identity (particularly the historical aspect of this relationship), a subject which, until recently, has been elided in work that has attempted to situate landscapes in their broader social/cultural context and the history of ideas.[120]

One of the most useful and sustained examinations of the role of the landscape in constructing a discourse of English national identity is Potts' "'Constable Country' between the wars" in the third volume of *Patriotism: The making and unmaking of British National Identity*.[121] In this chapter Potts demonstrates that landscape has played a key role in articulating English identity but he is at pains to avoid a narrow critique of little-England ruralism in order to address some of the "more significant ideological modulations you find associated with this kind of imagery as it has been deployed in British culture over the last hundred years or so".[122] For instance, Potts shows that in the second world war countryside images could be anchored relatively unambiguously in a celebratory nationalist ideology but that earlier in this century the English ideal did not exist just as a public mythology invoked at times of national crisis. Rather, it involved more pervasive myths of national and class identity and what it meant to be English. "Images of the countryside" writes Potts, "enjoyed the success they did because they could accommodate a variety of different responses, not just celebratory notions of an ideal England purged of social and political tensions".[123] Images of the countryside could, for instance, accommodate a nationalist ideology of pure landscape

[118]Lowenthal, D., 1991, "British national identity and the English landscape", *Rural History*, 2 (2), p.213.
[119]Driver, F., 1995, "Visualising landscape", *Journal of Urban History*, Vol.21, no.6, p.764.
[120]Pugh, S., 1990, *Reading Landscape: Country, City, Capital*, Manchester University Press; Cosgrove, D. and Daniels, S., 1988, *The Iconography of Landscape*, Cambridge University Press.
[121]Potts, A., 1989, *op cit.*
[122]*Ibid.*, p.160.

informed by notions of race and stock - something briefly examined in the section on literature. In the interwar period the idea that Englishness was an essence residing in a race which was to found in the purest form in the country, came into its own:

> Theories of racial identity were transferred to the inanimate landscape, a kind of reification in which the people still living and working in the countryside were assimilated, not just pictorially and aesthetically, but also ideologically, to the landscape.[124]

Potts further demonstrates that even the most stereotyped English countryside imagery could contain, in addition to the simple escapism and anti-progressivism with which it is commonly associated, the suggestion of "an ideal modernity":

> A picture of the perfect English countryside and village could act as the ideal image of what a modern Britain emerging from the unsightly ravages of Victorianism might become.[125]

This is a theme which has been examined in more detail by Matless who proposed in 1990 that the bulk of critical writing on issues of 'heritage', 'Englishness' and conservation of both landscapes and built environments have made polar opposites of notions of tradition, modernity, "of looking to the past and being up to date, of preservation and progress, and of 'image' and 'reality'".[126] It seems a little unfair to include Potts' chapter with those who have taken a less critical view, but nevertheless Matless skillfully draws out the complexities and subtleties of the "cultural baggage" that the English have strewn over the landscape.[127]

Matless' revisionist history of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and its modernising tendencies is quite the opposite of D.N. Jeans' "Planning and the Myth of the English Countryside in the Interwar Period" which no doubt would have made it onto Matless' list of authors who have polarised the notions of preservation and progress etc., had it not been published in the same year. Although posing the interesting

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[123]*Ibid.*, p.163.
[124]*Ibid.*, p.166.
[125]*Ibid.*, p.163.
[126]Matless, D., 1990, "Ages of English Design: preservation, modernism and tales of their history, 1926-1939", *Journal of Design History*, Vol.3, No.4, p.203.
[127]Driver, F., 1995, *op cit.*, p.765.

question of how a pervasive myth of the English countryside has affected the planning of that countryside, the article is little more than an excuse to demonstrate uncritically how good many vociferous authors were at ranting about the destruction of the countryside in the interwar years. Jeans fails to look beyond to the subtleties of their political and planning objectives.[128] Much the same criticism applies to Mandler's "Politics and the English Landscape since the First World War".[129] This demonstrates a rather uncritical approach to the very rich and sometimes almost overwhelmingly obstreperous contemporary writings on this issue.

The problems with papers like those by Jeans and Mandler is addressed by Matless in his paper on Hoskins in which he argues that

> many accounts dealing with 'images' or 'myths' of the English countryside employ those terms in a derogatory sense, denoting falsehood, illusion, deception. The imagined landscape is an 'image' distorting or concealing a more fundamental social and economic reality.[130]

The value of challenging such a hierarchy of truth or rhetoric of reality has allowed Matless a "sustained and critical engagement" with Hoskins' English landscape imagination, allowing "the power of one man's England [to] show, deliberately; to allow it a deserved space, though not to set it loose".[131] This is an approach that I can usefully adopt in my own research which deals with powerful images of England and the Cotswolds.

Another substantial contribution to the study of landscape and national identity was the body of papers on this theme in *Landscape Research* in 1991, generated by a conference of the Landscape Research Group the year before. The conference sought to address, from a variety of perspectives, "the relationships between the representation, design and management of landscapes and the construction of cultural heritage and

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[128]Jeans, D.N., 1990, "Planning and the myth of the English countryside in the interwar period", *Rural History*, 1(2), pp.249-264.
[129]Mandler, P., 1992, "Politics and the English landscape since the first world war", *The Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, vol.55, part 3, pp.459-476.
[130]Matless, D., 1993, "One Man's England: W.G. Hoskins and the English culture of landscape", *Rural History*, 4, 2, p.203-204.
[131]*Ibid.*, p.204.

national identities".[132] Daniels demonstrated how interpretation, appreciation and dissemination of Constable's landscapes has changed, and he narrates a modernist reading of them which reflects the delicate balance of modernising impulse and preservationist ethic elucidated by many of Matless' papers.[133] Daniels argues that Constable Country, in the form of *The Haywain*, can be seen as a key part of the South Country and essential England at the end of the nineteenth century but equally part of a rhetoric of vulnerability to invasive rashes of modern development and slow internal decay. In the twentieth century it was incorporated into a discourse of modernity when Flatford Mill was rescued from "ruin or the perils of pseudo-restoration".[134] "Haphazard, ramshackle developments might threaten Constable Country but not those which were well planned and securely built" argues Daniels, pointing to the renovation of Flatford Mill as creating something new and organically related to the past at the same time and thereby satisfying the modernist impulse of interwar England.[135] Although Daniels draws on the dubious notion of the South Country, he makes the important point that a particular identity for a landscape can be created, (re)created and (re)produced. This argument is also reflected throughout this thesis.

In another interesting article from this collection, Gruffudd locates English national identity in the skies, arguing that representations of peculiarly English skies are as important to defining national identity as the landscape. Drawing on a range of visual and written sources he demonstrates the links between "Constable's theatricality of the skies, inter-war representations of land and landscapes, and the cultural nationalism of wartime".[136] Another original article examines the relationships between diet, landscape and national identity in Constable country.[137] What this collection demonstrates is rich potential in the study of landscape and national identity to go beyond conventional

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[132]Gruffudd, P., Daniels, S., Bishop, P., 1991, "Guest Editorial - Landscape, heritage and national identity", *Landscape Research*, Summer 1991, Vol.16, No.2, p.1.
[133]Daniels, S., 1991, "The Making of Constable Country, 1880-1940" *Landscape Research*, Summer 1991, Vol.16, No.2, pp.9-17. See also Matless, D., 1990, *'Ordering the Land': the 'Preservation' of English Countryside, 1918-1939*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nottingham; Matless, D., 1991, *op cit.*, pp.203-212; Matless, D., 1990, "Definitions of England, 1928-1989: preservation, modernism and the nature of the nation", *Built Environment*, 16, pp.179-191.
[134]Daniels, S., 1991, *op cit.*
[135]*Ibid.*, p.15-16.
[136]Gruffudd, P., 1991, "Reach for the sky: The air and English cultural nationalism", *Landscape Research*, Summer 1991, Vol.16, No.2, p.19.

readings of well-known landscapes like those of Constable to intersect with other forms of representation, both verbal and visual. This is demonstrated by Revill's examination of Vaughan William's music, and in particular his conscious development of a "national style of music" during the inter war period.[138] It is further demonstrated in Stephen Daniels' book *Fields of Vision*.

Fields of Vision offers a sustained unpacking of the symbolism of St. Pauls Cathedral, a range of paintings and the mythologised site of Constable country, each of which is subjected to a close reading within discourses of empire, improvement and modernity amongst others.[139] The essays are predicated on the idea that national identities are coordinated and sometimes largely defined by

> 'legends and landscapes', by stories of golden ages, enduring traditions, heroic deeds and dramatic destinies located in ancient of promised home-lands with hallowed sites and scenery. The symbolic activation of time and space... gives shape to the 'imagined community' of the nation. Landscapes... picture the nation.[140]

These are assumptions which in broad terms underpin my own research, and although Daniels focuses on the late eighteenth century, his concern with the present and the past, with "opening up new perspectives on the way in which landscape imagery is constantly reinterpreted", is also something I wish to achieve with my own sources.[141] As one of Daniels' reviewers pointed out "reading his essays, one gets a sense of both the density of the mythical memories inscribed in our landscape and, also, of just how fragile and unstable their meanings actually are".[142] This is not, sadly, a compliment that could be paid to Lowenthal for his "European and English Landscapes as National Symbols" or the very similar "British National Identity and the English Landscape".[143] Both are founded on the themes of insularity, stability, order and artifice to explain

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[137]Bishop, P., 1991, "Constable Country: diet, landscape and national identity", *Landscape Research*, Summer 1991, Vol.16, No.2, pp.21-37.
[138]Revill, G., 1991, "The Lark Ascending: monument to a radical pastoral", *Landscape Research*, Summer 1991, Vol.16, No.2, pp.25-31.
[139]Daniels, S., 1993, *Fields of Vision*, Polity Press and Blackwell.
[140]*Ibid.*, p.5.
[141]Driver, F., 1995, "Visualising Landscape", *Journal of Urban History*, Vol.21, no.6, p.767.
[142]*Ibid.*, p.767.
[143]Lowenthal, D., 1994, "European and English landscape as national symbols", Hooson, D. (ed), *Geography and National Identity*, Blackwell, pp.15-38; Lowenthal, D., 1991, *op cit.*

English national identity - or, in the case of the latter article, *British* national identity without any clear argument about why this should be the case. Besides this, the idea that the relationship of landscape to English national identity can be boiled down to four themes seems to indicate a wilful ignorance of the recent scholarship in this field reviewed in this section.

Conclusion

It is clear that there is a growing body of work on the subject of landscape and national identity which has been informed by new theoretical work on the concept of landscape more broadly. There has also been interesting work by literary scholars on the construction of a dominant discourse of national identity in the twentieth century in fictional and non-fictional rural writing. Some attention has been paid to mythical figures and symbolic institutions of England but more work is needed here. All the literature reviewed in this chapter has focused on the construction of national identity, but as Daniels argued in his review of Samuel *The Making and Unmaking of British National identity*, "an important ingredient in the making - and unmaking - of national identity [is] the region".[144]

There are interesting contemporary resonances from looking at the historical construction of regional identity as Dodd has pointed out. He argues that "as the BBC and Labour begin to try to offset the power of the south east by setting up, respectively, important regional centres of production and English regional government, the way the English regions imagine their identity will become critical".[145] Nevertheless, very little work on historical regional identities[146] has been undertaken despite that fact that an area like the Cotswolds still retains a powerful image as quintessentially English.[147]

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[144]Daniels, S., 1991, *op cit.*, p.96.

[145]Dodd, P., 1995, "A Mongrel Nation", *Whose England is it Anyway?*, a special supplement of *New Statesman and Society*, 24 February, 1995, p.27.

[146]Hough has attempted though to look at this subject in a contemporary context but *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape* fails to live up to the promised interest of its title. Hough, M., 1990, *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape*, Yale University Press. Reviewed by Gruffudd, P., 1991, *Landscape Research*, Vol 16, No.2, pp.2,7,33.

[147]Dymphna Byrne, a travel writer for the *Observer*, described the Cotswolds as "the very picture of a perfect England. Their centuries old mullion-windowed houses with lichen encrusted roofs are part of the national consciousness. They... represent a dream of rural England we all want to share". The

The focus of the literature I have reviewed in this chapter has undoubtedly been on the first half of the twentieth century and especially the inter-war years. Heffernan and Gruffudd have argued that this is because this is the period most analogous to our own. "Within Britain" they propose,

> the two eras manifest sufficient similarity to justify this renewed critical comparison, particularly from a geographical perspective. The painful economic restructuring of recent years has re-focused attention on the differential regional dynamics of the British economy and has re-positioned local and regional politics and cultural issues at the forefront of contemporary debate.[148]

It also in my view contains some of the richest and most wide ranging primary source material. Although I have paid the interwar years a good deal of attention, this thesis goes further by examining the seventy years between 1880 and 1950. The choice of this period is partly primary and partly secondary source driven. Colls and Dodd's book also 'starts' in 1880. As it is my contention that Alun Howkins' use of the South Country in that volume is misled, 1880 seems a sensible place to begin. Furthermore the Cotswold primary sources for the years before 1880 are meagre. I 'end' in 1950 because I do not want to go further beyond the end of the Second World War.[149] I will address how the regional identity of the Cotswolds has been constructed between 1880 and 1950 and ask what role this region has had in the making and unmaking of national identity. It seems appropriate, then, to look at a time when national identity was being imagined,

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power of this sort of representation should not be underestimated and is reinforced by recent events in Aston Magna in the Cotswolds. Attempts to draw attention to some of the common nationwide social problems that also exist in the Cotswolds has drawn derision. Joanna Trollope recently called the Church View estate, consisting of "shabby" prefabricated Council Houses in Aston Magna, a "rural Moss Side". *The Daily Telegraph* reported that this was an attempt to demonstrate how deprivation can exist even in the 'golden triangle' of Moreton-in-Marsh, Chipping Campden and Broadway. But the view was hotly contested by the residents who significantly drew on the images of stability and tranquillity commonly associated with the Cotswolds to contest Trollope's analogy. Church View resident Margaret Nobes "got out her family album, turning up pictures of children on the summer lawns, and cricket on the green. 'Does that look like a community in crisis?' [she asked]". Byrne, D., 1994, "Travel Cotswolds", *The Observer Life Magazine*, 14.08.94, p.46; Weaver, M., 1996, "Rural Moss Side is a Trollope fiction, says villagers", *The Daily Telegraph*, Thursday January 4, 1996, p.8.

[148]Heffernan, M. and Gruffudd, P. (eds), 1988, "Preface" *'A Land fit for Heroes': Essays in the Human Geography of Inter-War Britain*, Loughborough University Department of Geography Occasional Paper No.14, p.2-3.

[149]Using obvious historical watersheds like wars to frame research may not be entirely satisfactory. Nevertheless, given that research must be finite, the Second World War seems to provide a convenient ending place here. Further, the sources for the Cotswolds - especially the sort of countryside writing that much of this thesis deals with - seem to change in both amount and character in the 1950s.

constructed and defended in a period of perceived rapid change and turmoil. The next chapter begins to explore these issues.

Chapter Four

A Unique Place and Set of Places

The Ballad of Cotsall[1]

God made the land of Cotsall
And all the world beside,
But every other paltry land
Arose at His divine command;
This only, with a practised hand,
He fashioned as a bride.

No terror as of mountains,
No rending cataract,
No grim, unscaleable ravine
Disturb her gentle placid mien;
She is, as she has ever been,
Of maidenhood compact.

She has no plains or rivers,
No splendour of the sea,
But little gracious winding streams,
And hillside woods and flowers and dreams,
Such gear a village main beseems,
And such a maid is shee.

God made great lords of Cotsall
In the days that are of old;
Great lords there were of fleece and flock,
Sturdy of soul as tree or rock;
I wis [sic] no sovereign held in mock
The masters of the wold.

They were no lords of battle,
Though lusty, tall and strong;
Yet would they join them to the fray
And hold their own the livelong day,
With knights who strove to steal away
What did to them belong.

Better they loved than cloth or gold
The holy land they trod,
Wherefore they built, themselves alone,
Great churches of the Cotsall stone
Where in most fitly to enthrone
The glory of their God.

John Haines, 1921.

[1]Haines, J., 1921, "The Ballad of Cotsall", *Poems*, London, Selwyn and Blount Ltd., p.28-30.

John Haines' poem *The Ballad of Cotsall* captures a popular representation of the Cotswolds as a romantic (with a small r) and picturesque (with a small p) English rural idyll. Yet only a few years before Haines published his poem, Ruth Ruck complained of the lack of interesting drives and walks on the high plains where "the roads run over a bleak tableland for miles and the landscape generally consists of ploughed fields divided by grey stone walls"[2] - hardly a little gracious winding stream in sight. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to explore and unpack the sometimes quite different representations of the rural Cotswolds.

In the first section of the chapter I will show how the Cotswolds were constructed as a region of contrast at different scales; contrast between the region as a whole and the neighbouring Severn Vale and between the region's uplands and valleys. I will propose that not only a geographical but specifically geological imagination was at work in these constructions. I will also introduce ideas of boundedness, difference and individuality, which run throughout this thesis, showing how they were used to construct a unique local identity for the Cotswolds. In this section I wish to emphasise that the Cotswolds could be represented not just as a single place but as a set of places.

In the second section of the chapter I will place these constructions of the Cotswolds in the context of a ruralist version of a specifically English culture. In doing so I will continue my argument about the "South Country" which, it has been argued, describes the ideal English landscape that those participating in the "discovery" of rural England went in search of, imagined, constructed and recreated. I will show that this vague, ill-defined notion has, paradoxically, shackled how we look at the role of landscape in the construction of Englishness and that we should abandon it in favour of the idea of a "middle landscape". This describes an ideal lightly cultivated and lightly populated landscape without reference to a specific topography or geographical location. The geographical imagination roams across the landscape unhindered, allowing England to be found everywhere in celebrations of diverse regional landscapes. The intimate relations between regional and national identity were, therefore, an

important element in the construction of Englishness in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries.

"And Hillside Woods and Fields and Dreams..."?

In this section I will show how the Cotswolds were constructed through the contrasts that were seen to exist between the Cotswolds and the Severn Vale. Such contrasts existed between not only the topography but the emotional and imaginative responses to these landscapes.

James John Hissey was an intrepid and enthusiastic travel writer whose cheerful disregard of the relative discomfort of some forms of road travel was trumpeted in the titles of his travel books, among them *A Drive through England; or, a thousand miles of road travel* (1885), *On the Box Seat from London to Land's End* (1886), *A Phaeton though the Eastern Counties* (1889) and *Across England in a Dog Cart* (1891).[3] Undertaking his seventh trip, a tour of ten English counties in 1894, Hissey reflected that "the beauty of England is a dream of loveliness, gentle, mellow and peace-bestowing... It is something to leave one's commonplace everyday surroundings behind, to blot them from memory, and to travel for a time in this true Arcadia".[4] After travelling from London through Surrey, Hampshire and Wiltshire he arrived in the Cotswolds - "that delightful old world, primitive, and picturesque region. It is a bit of real old England set in the midst of the new" he commented,

> unprogressive, slumberous, slow but full of infinite rest to the quiet seeking pilgrim tired of the turmoil of the towns. To travel through the Cotswolds is to turn back for centuries the hand of Time. On them you are away from the surroundings of the present; there one breathes as it were an atmosphere of the

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[2]Ruck, R., 1910, *Reminiscences of the Old Country - Historic Sites, Exceptional Scenery, Healthful Attributes*, John Ouseley Ltd, pp.23-24.

[3]Biographical and bibliographical information on James John Hissey from Bank, D. and Eposito, A. (eds), 1990, *British Biographical Index*, K.G. Saur, no page number; Kirk, J.F., 1891, *A Supplement to Allibone' Critical Dictionary of English Literature*, 2v in Sieveking, P. (ed), *British Biographical Archive*, Microfiche Edition, Sheet Number 555, section 119; Frontispiece to Hissey, J.J., 1913, *A Leisurely Tour in England*, Richard Bentley and Son. All Hissey's books listed here were published by Richard Bentley and Son of London.

[4]Hissey, J.J. 1894, *Through Ten English Counties - the Chronicle of a Driving Tour*, London Richard Bentley and Son, p.viii.

> past; old churches, old homes, old hostelries, old villages, unaltered and unimproved, abound and give us a genuine savour of antiquity.[5]

Talking about the Cotswolds as if the area had been marooned in the past was a common theme which I will look at more closely in chapter six. Here I am concerned particularly with Hissey's representation of the landscape and his responses to it. "As we drove on from Cirencester" he wrote, "the Cotswolds soon gave us a sample of their characteristic scenery... great bold rounded hills, rising out of deep wooded hollows with white winding roads climbing over them came into view, with a lengthened background of shadowed valleys and sunlit heights". As they proceeded, Hissey noticed that the country opened out and the "bleak hills" became further apart, of greater height and grander form, with deep valleys where the "grey-green gloom" of overhanging foliage was a "grateful change from the generally unsheltered country" of the high ground.[6] Here is an indication of the contrast between the inclement uplands and sheltered valleys.

On reaching the edge of the escarpment Hissey observed that

> ...the world in front of us looked over a vast expanse of level greenery that faded away into a mystery of far off blue; half land, half sky. Our road now began to descend in real earnest... As we drove down we had time to admire the grand scarped outlines of the Cotswold Hills, weather worn into all sorts of fantastic shapes; from our point of view it seemed almost as though the level land below had once been covered by the sea, and that this side of the Cotswold hills had been mighty cliffs descending thereto.[7]

I will say more about the sea imagery shortly. Coming down the escarpment into the Severn Vale left Hissey with a lasting impression of high bluffs contrasting with the level plain below. I will concentrate briefly on the relationship between the Cotswolds and the Severn Vale before considering how the contrasts between Cotswold uplands and valleys further characterised the area.

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[5] *Ibid.*, p.197.
[6] *Ibid.*, p.204.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp.199-206.

Cotswold and Severn Vale

J. Arthur Gibbs has been described as "the first of the modern topographers".[8] This is a very generous label, for Gibbs demonstrates only a cursory interest in crafting a systematic topography of the Cotswolds, adopting instead a casual anecdotal style in the much reprinted *A Cotswold Village*. Nevertheless this very popular book was widely read and (as I will soon show) sometimes blatantly plagiarised by early twentieth century authors writing about the Cotswolds. Gibbs constructed the Cotswold landscape by reference to the Severn Vale and through the combination of its characteristic uplands and valleys. These proved persuasive and popular means of describing the Cotswolds among future writers. I will leave Gibbs' description of the Cotswold uplands and valleys until the next section.

Born in 1867 in the City of Westminster, Gibbs was schooled at Eton and Oxford before joining the family firm of London bankers. He stayed there for only two years before going to live in the manor house at Ablington in the Cotswolds.[9] Gibbs wrote *A Cotswold Village* sometime between 1895 and 1898, the year in which he died aged 31. Expensively educated, well travelled and from a privileged background, Gibbs could retreat to the country where the family owned property and live without having to work, in his own words; "...a young squire of whom nothing more is expected than to stay at home farming and look after the place".[10] Gibbs' stated aim for *A Cotswold Village* was "only to record the simple annals of a quiet, old fashioned Gloucestershire hamlet and the country within walking distance of it".[11]

The influence of Gibbs' *A Cotswold Village* on later representations of the Cotswolds should not be underestimated. As I have already noted, it was often referred to and sometimes flagrantly plagiarised. Twenty two years after the publication of Gibbs' book, P.H. Ditchfield described the Cotswolds as "a land of silver trout streams and of valleys nestling under limestone hills. Wild flowers flourish on the downs; no

[8]Lewis, J., 1988, "Introduction", Gibbs, J.A., *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, p.11.
[9]*Ibid.*
[10]Gibbs, J.A., c.1893, *The Work of Life*, quoted by Lewis, J., *op cit.*, p.10.
[11]Gibbs, J.A., source unknown, quoted by Lewis, J., *op cit.*, p.11.

sound of railway trains breaks the sweet solitudes, nor factory chimneys belch forth clouds of black smoke".[12] The opening chapter of *A Cotswold Village* begins;

> Who will fly with me westward to the land of golden sunshine and silvery trout streams, the land of breezy uplands and valleys, nestling under limestone hills, where the scream of the railway whistle is seldom heard and the smoke of the factory darkens not the long summer days?"[13]

Not everyone was as overt as Ditchfield, but a number of Gibbs' observations on the Cotswolds, particularly his ambivalent attitude to the landscape, pervade later representations. His opening remarks, quoted above, are soon qualified for instance. "Up on the wolds" he complains, "all is bleak, dull and uninteresting. The air up there is ever chill; walls of loose stone divide field from field, and few houses are to be seen. But down in the valley all is fertile and full of life".[14]

The valley to which Gibbs refers is the Severn Vale. Here, more clearly than in Hissey's earlier visit, its proximity throws the upland landscape of the north-west Cotswolds, where the escarpment is steepest and highest, into sharp relief. Passing through the Cotswolds long before Hissey and Gibbs, in the early nineteenth century, William Cobbett commented that "anything so ugly [as the Wolds] I have never seen before" and in *Rural Rides* noted that "as there are, for a mile or two together, no trees to be seen, and, as the surface is not smooth and green like the downs, this is a sort of country, having less to please the eye than any other I have ever seen".[15] Cobbett was, however, impressed by the Vale of Gloucester - a part of the larger Severn Vale lying to the north west of the western escarpment of the Cotswolds. "All here is fine" he commented, "fine farms; fine pastures; all inclosed [sic] fields; all divided by hedges; orchards a plenty; and I had scarcely seen one apple since I left Berkshire".[16] Gibbs appeared to concur with Cobbett's view of the Vale. "Who can describe the magnificent panorama presented by the wide Severn at low tide?" he mused,

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[12]Ditchfield, P.H., 1920, *By-ways in Berkshire and the Cotswolds*, London Robert Scott, p.263.
[13]Gibbs, J.A., 1988, *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, p.15. First published 1898.
[14]*Ibid.*, p.25.
[15]Cobbett, W., 1985, *Rural Rides*, Penguin, p.404. First published1830.
[16]Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Son Ltd, pp.19-20.

> Yellow sands, glittering like gold in the dazzling sunshine, stretched away for miles; beyond these a vista of green meadows, with the distant Cotswold hills rising out of a dreamy haze; waters of chrysolite, with fields of malachite beyond; the azure sky overhead flecked with clouds of pearl and opal, and all around the pear orchards in full bloom.[17]

In this description the Severn Vale is verdant, fecund, productive; painted in vibrant colours and representing for Gibbs the pastoral England he wished to escape to from the "miserably hot and dusty" London.[18]

The difference between a characteristically pastoral landscape and the Cotswolds was also a source of reflection for Henry Branch who called the first chapter of *Cotswold and Vale* "These High Wild Hills" - Shakespeare's description of the Cotswold hills in *Richard II*. "The Cotswold landscape is bold and impressive" he remarked in his opening paragraph,

> but it is not grandiose. Nor is it characteristically English. The 'English' pastoral is different - gentler, warmer in colour. When we make use of the term we think more of Warwickshire, or Worcestershire, or the Gloucester Vale, or those peaceful, beautiful Home Counties.[19]

Here the Cotswolds are again juxtaposed to the Gloucester Vale which is held up as an example of the English pastoral. For Branch the Cotswolds were "a compromise - a land of transition from the English pastoral to the mountains of Wales".[20] Louise Imogen Guiney, writing in *Blackwoods Magazine* in 1913, reflected this view, pointing out that

> this whole country is high land... But the look of the high land, generally bare upon the loftiest ridges, is not romantic - at least not in the sense in which the Scottish Border and Welsh Marches are romantic... [but] to those who love the gold green masses, there are no downs more noble.[21]

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[17]Gibbs, J.A., 1988, *op cit.*, p.21.
[18]*Ibid.*, p.15.
[19]Branch, H., 1907, *Cotswold and Vale; or glimpses of past and present in Gloucestershire*, Cheltenham, Norman Sawyer and Co., p.1.
[20]*Ibid.*, p.1.
[21]Guiney, L.I., 1913, "Some account of Arcady", *Blackwood's Magazine*, no. MCLXXIV, p.267.

In 1908 James John Hissey returned to the Cotswolds, in the course of his *English Holiday with Car and Camera*. This time he was in no hurry to leave the high wolds which he had previously described as "bleak" but which were now "delightfully bleak".[22] "A long stiff climb brought us to the summit of the windy wolds" he wrote

> and though not a leaf was stirring in the valley below, on the hills above we were refreshed by a bracing, though balmy, breeze. A glorious, open, wind-swept land was before and around us, a majestic sweep of curving uplands, over which the vision ranged unrestrained, to where on the horizon the earth seemed to melt into the sky... Around us in mighty curves were a sea of hills rising bare to the sky, and dipping down to the sheltered valleys; hills beyond hills unfolded themselves, and nothing else but green hills growing into grey and fading into blue.[23]

There is no doubt that Hissey's enjoyment of the high wolds was greatly enhanced by being able to race across them in his car - he speaks of being possessed by the spirit of speed, and the landscape described above was experienced during a "bracing, inspiriting drive, a drive to be remembered".[24] I will say more about different means of consuming the Cotswold landscape in chapter seven.

Although Hissey had displayed enthusiasm for the high wolds in his 1908 trip, it was clear that the Cotswolds still posed a challenge to his aesthetic sensibilities. Hissey returned to the Cotswolds in 1913 in his *Leisurely Tour of England*. On this trip he was "in search of the picturesque" as well as "the unfamiliar in a familiar land"[25] and he found that his general impression of the Cotswolds contested his idea of "the real unspoilt country" which consisted of

> pleasant pastoral scenery, time-honoured homes, quiet farmsteads, old coaching inns, peaceful villages, each with their ancient churches, quaint little market towns, and here and there a ruined abbey or crumbling castle.[26]

Examples of such countryside could be found, he noted, in the "beautiful and fruitful" Vale of Evesham.[27] Here is an example of the lightly cultivated, lightly populated

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[22]Hissey, J.J., 1908, *An English Holiday with Car and Camera*, Macmillan and Co., p.336.
[23]*Ibid.*, pp.336-338.
[24]*Ibid.*, p.338.
[25]Hissey, J.J., 1913, *A Leisurely Tour in England*, Macmillan and Co., p.vii.
[26]*Ibid.*, pp.viii-ix.

middle landscape that seems to define England more clearly than that notion of the South Country does. Hissey could find England anywhere he felt and saw it to be. I will expand this argument in the last section on this chapter.

I deliberately mentioned Hissey's "general impression" of the Cotswolds for he was able to find some very good examples of his "real unspoilt country" in the Cotswold valleys. Invariably the Cotswolds as defined against the Severn Vale were painted with broad-brush strokes and I will show in the next section that, in another version of the Cotswolds, some much finer brushwork revealed a far more complex, differentiated landscape.

Comparing the Cotswolds to the Severn Vale did not always reflect badly on the Cotswolds. The "spacious solitude" of the uplands in the Cotswolds appealed to Hissey, perhaps because they provided the element of the unfamiliar which he enjoyed alongside the picturesque. "The Cotswolds always delight me," he wrote, with little trace of the ambivalence he showed in 1894, "for on them I realise the sense of solitude, silence and space - a solitude that would satisfy an anchorite".[28]

Algernon Gissing found praise for both vale and hill in his *Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*. As an enthusiastic venerator of the Cotswolds, he admired the bold irregularity of the escarpment, backed by Cleeve Cloud with its "stimulating hint of wild open spaces... and of bracing winds".[29] He spoke of the "tonic of exhilaration" which was the peculiar property of the hills and of the reciprocal relationship between the Cotswolds and the Severn Vale:

> Some of us may feel that full appreciation of the lower-lying beauty and luxuriance can only be fully gained by its association with these bare neighbouring heights. They have, of course, nothing in common with the stern spirit of the moors, but there is the wild freedom inseparable from the extensive commons with their fragrant gorse bloom, their linnets and stonechats, and sweet plaint of the lapwings.[30]

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[27]*Ibid.*, p.141.
[28]*Ibid.*, p.ix.
[29]Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., p.191.
[30]*Ibid.*, pp.191-192.

Gissing was showing that the upland Cotswold landscape, though untypical of the English pastoral, could have as much imaginative intensity. Yet it was lent that intensity in part by the proximity of a 'typical' pastoral landscape in the shape of the Severn Vale. As I have shown, this relationship had been important in the past, but only to highlight aspects of the Cotswold landscape which were unappealing for Gibbs and others. Something had changed. In the words of Reginald Wills,

> There are hills *and* hills - hills that are pugnacious without the corresponding mercy of gorgeous scenery to nullify the effort of climbing them, and hills, which when the effort is achieved, bitterly disappoint the ardent climber who has exulted in the desire to cry "Excelsior". No such sorry fate awaits the visitor to the Cotswold Hills, for, as the ascent commences, so in perfect sympathy with the effort comes gradually but intensively an unfolding of scenery which defies imagination and withers attempted criticism.[31]

Coming across the wolds to the escarpment's edge, Clare Cameron took delight in following the "impetuous and capricious" road from Northleach to Birdlip to admire the scene "from that famous height as one gazes down, across vast broken slopes as across a bowl, of verdant plain and woods and meadows and stream" - the view that gave Edward Hutton "all our home at a glance".[32] On the other side of this reciprocal relationship, Alison Murray argued that the beauty and majesty of Cleeve Cloud could only be fully appreciated when viewed from the Vale, especially when illuminated by the setting sun. "Then one can realise its impressiveness, with its spreading moorland summit and its broad golden brow rising above the thick, dark woods on the lower slopes" she wrote.[33]

The ambivalence towards the Cotswolds which had resulted from unfavourable comparisons with the Severn Vale was melting away - Edward Hutton, for instance, saw the Cotswolds and the Vale of Evesham as two different parts of the same paradise.[34]

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[31]Wills, R., c.1929, *The Cotswold Country - An Illustrated Handbook describing the Glories of a Charming Countryside with some Notes on the Progress of the Cotswold Stores*, The British Publishing Company, Crypt House Press, Gloucester, p.7.
[32]Cameron, C., 1930, *Green Fields of England - A Book of Footpath Travels*, London, Constable and Co. Ltd., p.69-70; Hutton, E., 1932, *Highways and Byways in Gloucestershire*, Macmillan and Co., London, p.59.
[33]Murray, A., 1930, *The Cotswolds*, Crypt House Pocket Series published by The British Publishing Company Co. Ltd., Crypt House Press, Gloucester and London, p.9.
[34]Hutton, E., 1932, *op cit.*

The proximity of two very different landscape types still worked to heighten the contrasts between them but, by the time Gissing, Moore and Murray were writing in the 1920s and 1930s, the feeling that the Vale represented a more authentically English landscape than the Cotswolds was fading. Each landscape could be celebrated in their own right as representing something of England in themselves - and this is an important strand in the argument about finding England everywhere that I will make in the last part of this chapter.

Imaginative Geologies

Definitions of the Cotswolds and the Severn Vale were in part situated in a discourse of geology and in this section I will briefly explore how this scientific discourse was imaginatively reworked in representations of the escarpment edge as a headland jutting into a sea which filled the valley below. This was a representation which reinforced the impression of the Cotswolds as set apart from the rest of England - an idea which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

By the late nineteenth century one geological interpretation of the landscape of the Cotswold escarpment and the vale had achieved some currency among local geologists. Setting out from Charlton Kings on his cycle tour through west and central England, amateur geologist S.S. Buckman noted confidently that

> The sea of the early Jurassic Period, of course, once covered this area, because the Lias is now beneath the road; but the non-geological mind does not at once grasp the idea that the sea of the post-liassic period also covered it, depositing strata like those of Leckhampton and Cleeve Hill. So to commence the story of the Severn Valley, it is necessary, in imagination, to refill that valley with its lost Jurassic and Cretaceous strata, and then to tell the story of its excavation out of a great Cretaceous plain... raised, perhaps 3000 feet above the present level of the road to Coomb Hill.[35]

The idea of a prehistoric sea from which the rocks of the escarpment were uplifted was not confined to the pages of the *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club*. The anonymous author of the *Handbook for Travellers in Goucestershire* noted that

"the geological formation of the Cotswolds strongly supports the belief in the existence of a great channel of the sea, extending southwards" which had lapped against the cliffs of the escarpment resulting in formations "precisely like the headlands of a shore formed by the action of a sea acting upon soft and hard materials".[36] This is a slightly different interpretation, for Buckman did not suggest that a sea remained once the limestone had been uplifted, nor that the shape of the escarpment was the result of marine erosion. But notwithstanding these differences, the idea of a prehistoric sea was compelling to writers like Algernon Gissing, Alison Murray and others.

Algernon Gissing used the imagery of the sea in the valley to reinforce his impression of having passed into a different land once in the Cotswolds. The escarpment clearly marked a change of atmosphere. "No doubt the eye plays a great part in producing this impression" Gissing noted,

> but it is more than that. Every sense becomes aware of the immediate change. if you ascend this north-west slope at any point between Mickleton Hill and Birdlip, a few strides at the summit alter the whole tone of your reflections. This is one of the joys of living upon or under what the geologists call an escarpment. Even without a wide ground mist to work up the illusion, you can easily imagine a great sea occupying that rich vale, washing up to the fine headlands and filling the coombs and inlets that diversify that beautiful front.[37]

Looking out over the vale from the edge of the escarpment, H.J. Massingham saw "the plain that still looks like the floor of the primeval sea that once washed over it, with tree domes for cycads and farmhouses for rocks, and now the clouds that sagged over it were like an ocean swell. Into it ran the great horns of the Cotswold in a thin blue cliff line, and behind be spread the immense tableland of Cotswold".[38]

Murray was also familiar with the geological theory that a primeval sea once occupied the Severn Vale. The Edge - privileged with that capital E - told the tale of those "countess ages ago" when the sea divided the Cotswolds and the Malverns. This

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[35]Buckman, S.S., 1898, "Observations of a Cycle Tour", *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club*, Volume XII, Part III, p.217.
[36]Anonymous, 1895, *A Handbook for Travellers in Gloucestershire*, Fourth Edition revised, John Murray, London, p.8.
[37]Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Sons, p.40
[38]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *Wold Without End*, Cobden Sanderson, p.50.

was an image that it was easy for her to conjure up on mornings when the vale lay under the shroud of a white ground mist. "The illusion that the Vale is a great sea is... weirdly compelling" she wrote, "until the tops of the trees break through the gossamer and the illusion vanishes".[39] For these writers, imagining a great sea in the valley marked the Cotswolds' difference from not only the vale but the rest of England. The notion of boundedness will be explored further in chapter six.

Uplands and Valleys

In an earlier section I showed how the landscape of the Cotswolds and attitudes towards that landscape were defined broadly in relation to the nearby Severn Vale. In this section I wish to look more closely at how the combination of sometimes contrasting upland and valley landscapes *within* the Cotswolds contributed to its representation and the construction of a unique local identity for the area.

Let me return to Gibbs' *A Cotswold Village* and his description of the river Coln;

> A silver stream is the Coln hereabouts, the abode of fairies and fawns and nymphs and dryads. But when the afternoon sun shines upon it, it becomes a stream of diamonds set in banks of emeralds, with an arched and groined roof of jasper, carved with foliations of graceful ash and willow, and over all a sky of sapphire sprinkled with clouds of pearl and opal. Later on towards evening there will be floods of golden light on the grass and the beech trees up the eastern slope of the valley and on the bare red earth under the trees, red with fifty years' beech nuts. And later still, when the distant hills are dyed as if with archil, the sapphire sky will be striped with bars of gold and dotted with coals of fire; rubies and garnets, sardonyx and chrysolite will all be there, and the bluish green of beryl, the western sky as varied as felspar and changing colour as quickly as the chameleon.[40]

This passage bears striking similarity to Gibbs' much shorter description of the Severn Vale in which he compares the sand to gold, water to chrysolite and clouds to pearls and

[39]Murray, A., 1930, *The Cotswolds*, Crypt House Pocket Series published by The British Publishing Company Co. Ltd., Crypt House Press, Gloucester and London, p.7.

[40]Jasper - an opaque variety of quartz, usually red, yellow or brown; archill or orchill - a red or violet dye from lichen; sardonyx - onyx in which white layers alternate with sard, a yellow or orange-red conelian; chrysolite - a precious stone, a yellowish-green or brownish variety of olivine; beryl - a kind of transparent precious stone, especially pale green, blue or yellow; felspar - any of a group of aluminium silicates. Gibbs, J.A., 1988, *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, first published 1898, p.207.

opals. He uses these geological metaphors of minerals, precious stones and rocks to invest his scenes with particularly vivid colours which in turn suggest a lush, sunny, perhaps even sumptuous rural scene. This stands in stark opposition to his description of the uplands as a "wild uncultivated region".[41] Given his view that the Severn Vale represented an ideal rural landscape, it should come as no surprise that only places in the Cotswolds that could present similar scenery to Gibbs, for instance Coln-St-Aldwyn and Bibury in the Coln Valley, were considered by him to have "scenery typical of rural England in its most pleasing form".[42]

This is not to suggest that Gibbs entirely disliked the uplands. He was instead a study in ambivalence, for whilst the valleys, not to mention the vale, appealed to him aesthetically, the "cold bleak hills" offered him excellent hunting and shooting, the real pleasure of which lay "in its wildness".[43] Towards the end of his book he finds himself aroused in equal measure by the Cotswolds' uplands and valleys and thus "infected by the spirit of the downs". He concludes, "I love the pure, bracing air and the boundless sense of space in the open hills as much as I ever loved the more concentrated charms of the valley".[44]

Herbert Evans also identified a combination of uplands and valleys as characteristic of the region in his contribution to the extensive Highways and Byways series, *Highways and Byways in Oxford and the Cotswolds*. "From whatever side he enters it the traveller who penetrates into the Cotswolds proper is conscious of having passed into a new region" he noted.

> The long stretches of upland, the winding valleys, the clear trout-streams, and the grey venerable hamlets... the very vegetation, the weather beaten ashes of the hills, the sheep-downs fragrant with wild thyme and burnet, and the deep, rich water-meadows below, with here and there a thick covert of oak and hazel are all marks of a strange land, marked off by its peculiar genius from the outside everyday world.[45]

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[41] *Ibid.*, p.107.
[42] *Ibid.*, p.117.
[43] *Ibid.*, p.91.
[44] *Ibid.*, p.201.
[45] Evans, H., 1905, *Highways and Byways in Oxford and the Cotswolds*, Macmillan and Co., p.146.

Evans was certainly most interested in exploring the valleys and their villages but clearly recognised that the uplands were an important element in the Cotswold landscape even though he chose not to go onto them. Equally, Henry Branch rarely ventured up onto the high wolds - those "high wild hills". As I showed in the last section, Henry Branch's *overall* impression of the Cotswolds was that it did not conform to his idea of the English pastoral - he called it a "land of transition". However, this did not mean that he couldn't find individual examples of this ideal landscape in its valleys, describing Sevenhampton as "sweet" with its little church

> sliding down the hill, its mullioned manor house, and its confusion of cottage gables, flung about at all sorts of angles and attitudes amid stately trees and luscious meadows, watered copiously by brooks and springs that look unfailing. There is no pleasanter, more richly wooded, more typically rural district on the Cotswolds.[46]

When Branch moved on to Bibury he again found a landscape that appealed to his idea of pastoral England. His description of the fields around Bibury drew on similar imagery to Gibbs' account of his view of the Severn Vale - indeed, Branch referred frequently to *A Cotswold Village* throughout his own book. Emphasising productivity and fecundity in a vividly coloured landscape, he wrote

> the walk through the flowery fields and along the by-roads of the Coln Valley, past grey towers and slumberous hamlets, past herds of inquisitive calves and sleek kine that grouped themselves in pastures ablaze with colour, was a real enjoyment.[47]

Notwithstanding his attraction to the valleys, the presence of the high wolds was important to Branch's overall enjoyment of the Cotswolds. He pointed to the "bewitching alteration of quaint cottages and swelling uplands and rolling hills and sylvan peeps and vistas" as one of the Cotswolds' most appealing characteristics.[48] William Monk, the author of *By Road from Cheltenham to Oxford*, was similarly interested in the valleys where he could find "many of the prettiest villages in England" but nonetheless appreciated the "characteristic Cotswold scenery, with its 'tummocky'

[46]Branch, H., 1907, *op cit.*, pp.134-135.
[47]*Ibid.*, p.163.
[48]*Ibid.*, p.33.

hills and rich verdure".[49] For Monk, the views from the highest public house in the Cotswolds at Puesdown (700ft) were "magnificent. The air is life-giving... On the north there is a beautiful tract of country all showing in a high degree characteristic scenery of the Cotswold type. There is certainly no more beautiful part of England".[50]

Alison Murray also evoked the contrast between upland wold and Cotswold valley to celebrate the area's local character, hinting at its ineffability and finding herself at a loss to convey its true character in words.

> To say that it is a region of rolling, stone-walled uplands, deep valleys, sparkling streams and wooded combes and secluded villages of grey stone cottages, is to convey only a partial idea of its peculiar character and charm. I despair of painting a word picture that will visualise for the reader a land blessed by nature with such varied natural attractions; that will give a vivid impression of its contrasts; of bare wind-swept moorland stretches and sheltered woods perfumed with wild flowers; of camp-crowed hills and rippling trout streams; of fragrant sheep-walks and gorge-like valleys; of lonely high roads striding over the uplands and the leafy, windy by-ways dipping into nooks and hollows.[51]

Murray identified the solitude and tranquillity of the high uplands as their principle attraction, attributing to them "a stillness that can be felt".[52] She also invested the Cotswolds with a quixotic significance, reflecting that her

> last impression must be of peaceful, unspoilt scenes, more in keeping with the spirit that seems to brood over these wind-swept uplands; this mystic land of seductive valleys and hidden, ancient villages, where the blue of the distant hills is matched by the marvel of the clouds, the colours of the fresh-ploughed earth and the wondrous shades of the trees under the magic touch of an autumn sunset.[53]

Murray's "spirit of the wind-swept uplands" found expression in H.W. Timperley's work as "the upland mood".[54] Timperley's *A Cotswold Book*, published in 1931 and Murray's *The Cotswolds* mark something of a departure in Cotswold writing. They were describing and responding to the Cotswold landscape with an imaginative

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[49]Monk, W., 1922, *By Road from Cheltenham to Oxford with some account of the places near the route*, Evesham, W.H. Smiths Ltd, The Journal Press, p.3.
[50]*Ibid.*, p.5.
[51]Murray, A., 1930, *op cit.*, p.12.
[52]*Ibid.*, p.18.
[53]*Ibid.*, p.96.

and emotional intensity that had not been apparent in, for instance, Branch, Evans and Monks' work. And whilst Murray found herself lost for words, Timperley was intent on subjecting his responses to scrutiny and analysis.

Once Timperley was on the uplands "a dream-like atmosphere of aloofness from all life but that of the upland world begins to make visual remoteness awaken feelings that fill the mind with a mood rather than with thought".[55] Visual remoteness was something which Timperley gave some thought to, arguing that "it is not the width of the landscape seen, but its power of suggestion".[56] The view from the edge of the escarpment over the Severn Vale, for instance, was a "view that should not be missed, yet I think the great sweep of the scene means less to the imagination than to the eye".[57] He subjected the view of the Cotswolds that fulfilled his idea of visual remoteness to careful scrutiny;

> My view is over the wall, and all I can see is a grass field, a wall, and the sky. The field curves away from the wall at the roadside; it is not steep, but it is long enough and wide enough to show, where it finally comes against the sky, a crest beyond which the land, though visible, sinks away and seems to leave the field high in space and air. The wall that completes the scene is not the one at the roadside, but another which runs out from it at right-angles and follows, without a break, the rising recession of the field until it reaches the crest and disappears. The converging lines and diminishing height of the wall help the eye to take in the true scale of the field by emphasising the sweep of distance to the skyline, and then, by going from sight, strengthens the feeling of high spaciousness. In this bare simplicity of field and wall coming against the sky I think there is more to draw the imagination to far horizons than in the crowded detail of shire after shire.[58]

The front cover illustration - drawn by L.S. Lowry who contributed all the pencil illustrations for Timperley's book - emphasises the spaciousness and simplicity of this scene (figure one). It is possible, however, that Lowry did not share Timperley's exhilaration. Christopher Neve has argued that Lowry's loneliness was reflected in his paintings of "empty" landscapes in which "even the weather is absent, white days with no shadows and no wind, when all natural events seem suspended by a ceiling of no

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[54]Timperley, H.W., 1931, *A Cotswold Book*, London, Jonathan Cape.
[55]*Ibid.*, p.128.
[56]*Ibid.*, p.32.
[57]*Ibid.*, p.32.
[58]*Ibid.*, p.33.

particular colour and there is no movement". "Uplands" is drawn in the unsettled greyish white, "the colour of nothing at all" that characterises Lowry's empty landscapes.[59]

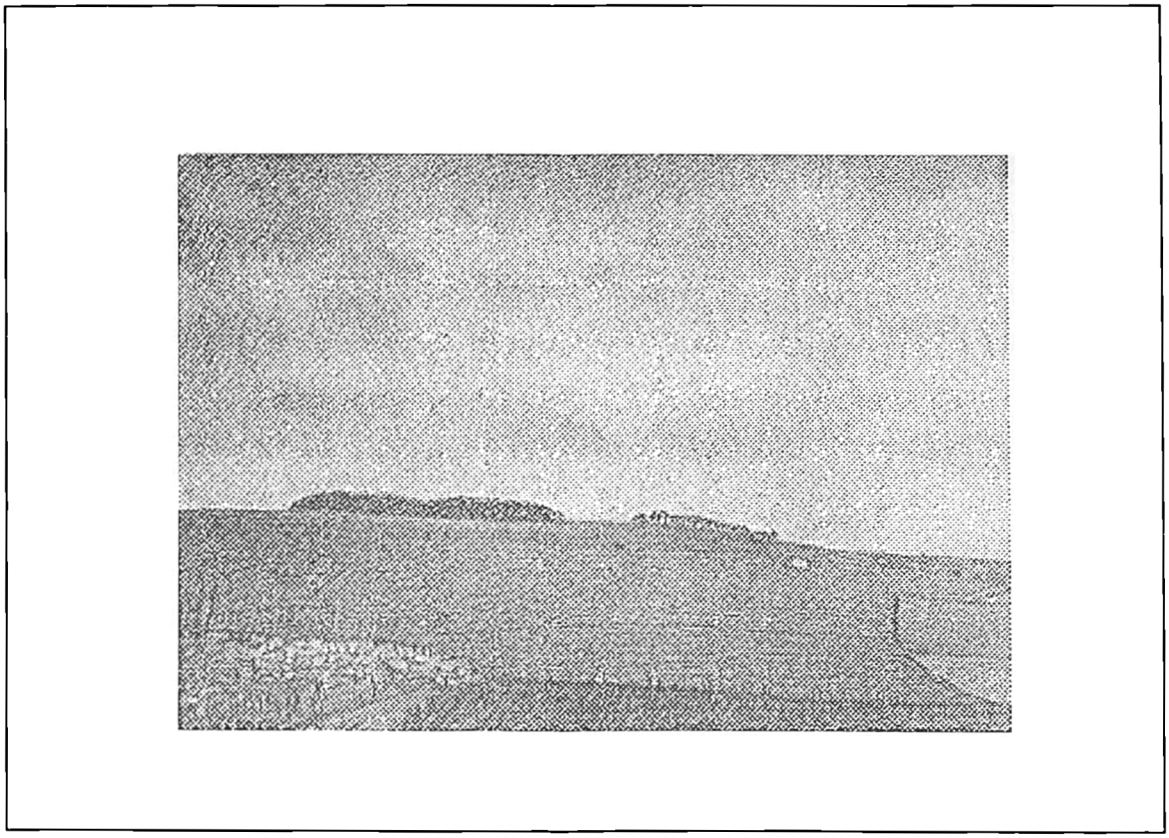

Figure One: "Uplands" by L.S. Lowry.

It is ironic that Timperley's elation should be illustrated by Lowry's loneliness. Even Timperley's careful analysis of the suggestive lines and curves of this field near Condicote could not entirely account for the upland mood which was characterised by a feeling of happiness and well being. It was as if "a spirit, calm in deeper serenity than the unaided mind can know, enters your own, almost imperceptibly at first, but strengthening its influence the farther the plain falls behind, until it possesses you so completely that it holds you forever".[60]

It would be a mistake to assume in all this that in concentrating on the uplands, Timperley ignored the valleys. Unlike the other authors I have looked at in this section,

[59]Neve, C., 1990, *Unquiet Landscape - Places and Ideas in Twentieth Century English* Painting, Faber and Faber, p.106, 107.
[60]Timperley, H.W., 1931, *op cit.*, p.38-39.

there was no stark contrast between high wolds and valleys for Timperley. The upland spirit had also invested the valley village of Condicote, for instance, which was in his view "completely lost to the outer world in the upland mood";

> The squared stones, the wall and roofs they form, the grouping of the houses, the cornfields and sheepwalks lifting into long gently-swelling curves round the village, the upland spirit that is in all these - they seem to have come together in a way which fills Condicote with the essence of their life".[61]

Condicote was, to Timperley, a prime example of the harmonious relationship between the valleys and the high wolds. "The Cotswold uplands" he wrote,

> form a little world of their own, but it does not take long to discover that their boundaries enclose two worlds, not one: that in which man has combined nature to find occupation on sheep walk and corn land and in quarry, and build his homes... placing them along or seldom very far from the streams that water the upland valleys; and another world in which nature was not strange to man but beguiled him to the hill tops and the highest open hillsides, there to build the temples, tombs and earthworks which are all that is left of his world today. These two worlds, the peopled and the unpeopled, are lower and upper... [but] there is no feeling of separation between the two.[62]

H.J. Massingham called this combination of upper and lower landscapes "the voices of a single fugue," present in the north Cotswolds to a greater extent than the south.[63] "The North Cotswolds are in all their forms and aspects indivisible" he wrote, "they are the Wolds whose country is perfectly distinctive, and neither downs nor mountains nor mere upland". The difference between the landscapes of the north and south was very slight but important; "the wolds themselves embrace many a cup-like hollow and river valley, though not the sharp clefts of the South Cotswolds, and these softer bowers are organic to the true wold country".[64]

When Massingham went in search of a "quintessential memory" of the Cotswolds it was to the north that he turned. He searched without success near Andoversford and Winchcombe, Cleeve Common, Broadway Tower and Chedworth for

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[61] *Ibid.*, p.128, 131.
[62] *Ibid.*, p.186-187.
[63] Massingham, H.J.,1932, *op cit.*, p.14.
[64] *Ibid.*, p.13.

"a view of the North Cotswolds which should manifest their quality in a durable form to the memory".[65] Then, just outside the "insignificant" wold village of Clapton-on-the-Hill, his "incredibly true landscape of the mind's eye" was found.

> The eye wings a complete circumference of the wold country... before, behind, to the right hand and the left, it was all pure wold country, and almost empty of human mark as the cloud country it was wedded to above it. But the unobtrusive human suggestion was always there, in the beech-brakes, the stone-walls, the diligent sheep, the high, cultivated fields and... the wooded hollows that wrapped warm the invisible villages. The satisfaction was ultimate; one wanted no more of English land than this scene.[66]

This was very different from the ideal Cotswold landscape that Gibbs had identified. Like others before him, Massingham could find examples of a pleasing pastoral landscape in the midst of the hills - he called the shallow valley between Ilmington Downs and Red Horse Vale "the essence of all we term pastoral, softer than the wold and yet with the downs encompassing the bowl carrying on the wold-breadth and spaciousness".[67] However, Massingham was famously hostile towards the "dead hand of the picturesque", and he, like Timperley, did not slavishly search for such examples.[68] This is one of the important differences between these two authors and others that I have considered. Branch, Evans and Gibbs and others were prepared to admit that the uplands formed a part of the Cotswold character, but were most comfortable and fulfilled when identifying pastoral rural landscapes in the region's valleys. Edward Hutton, for instance, drew some satisfaction from pointing out that Painswick lacked "the pastoral charm of the many Cotswold villages that lie in the eastern valleys of the Leach and Coln and Windrush".[69] Combing the valleys armed with the "yardsticks of rurality"[70] - and a pastoral rurality at that - was an anathema to Massingham and Timperley. This was clearly evident when Massingham spoke of leaving the Cotswolds to find that the landscapes goes "dead commonplace, as though it

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[65]*Ibid.*, p.243-247.
[66]*Ibid.*, p.247-248.
[67]*Ibid.*, p.125.
[68]Wright, P., 1995, *The Village that Died for England*, Jonathan Cape, p.109.
[69]Hutton, E., 1932, *Highways and Byways in Gloucestershire*, Macmillan and Co. Limited, London, p.210.
[70]Howkins, A., 1986, "The Discovery of Rural England", Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), *Englishness, Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm, p.64.

had suddenly lost its spirit, its individuality, its real true quintessential self. It become just mass-country".[71]

For Massingham and Timperley it was the unique *combination* of valley and upland in an "uncapturable essence of beauty composed of a multitude of contrasts and separable phenomena"[72] which was an indispensable feature of the Cotswolds (and especially the north Cotswolds). This gave them an "indescribable quality of mingled homeliness and grandeur, spacious simplicity and internal detail, warmth and illimitableness, sweetness and freedom" and, important for the argument I will make at the end of this chapter, "a place unique in English country".[73]

Thus the theme of contrast continued to inform representations of the Cotswolds, but *not* by reference to a particular landscape ideal which one aspect of the Cotswold country was seen to fulfil whilst the other did not. Instead the individuality of the Cotswold landscape was celebrated, and this was part of a wider tendency to identify and commemorate regional difference that featured particularly in the large number of topographical books published in the 1930s - a point which I will return to shortly. The Cotswolds as a land of contrasts found a place in the contents of these topographical books about Britain and England.

Charles Bradley Ford contributed the chapter on the Cotswolds and the West Midland Vale to *The Beauty of Britain*. He struggled to identify the quintessence of the Cotswolds, finding that whilst the "geographical dry bones" were easy enough to distinguish, the ethos was less tangible but very pervasive and hard to analyse. "It must have at least some connection with the sense of contrast in the elements that go to produce the Cotswold picture" he reflected,

> the spacious beauty of the wold heaving buff-green into the distance, its thin fringes of beech clear-cut against a crowded sky, and the seclusion of the valley, with its pollarded willows and clear brooks threading a string of villages in the

[71]H.J. Massingham,1932, *op cit.*, p.264.
[72]*Ibid.*, p.287.
[73]*Ibid.*, p.161, 287.

> tawny local stone, built with a careful craftsmanship and sense of style that are the peculiar achievements of the district.[74]

William Beach Thomas, in *The English Landscape*, was more laconic, pointing out that the "wolds in one respect are very stark for a bit of England"[75] but later qualified this by suggesting that the "essential quality of the Cotswolds is the strong contrast of stark landscape with the most humane and lovely villages".[76]

The Beauty of Britain was published by B.T. Batsford Ltd. who produced a large number of topographical books in the 1930s. Among these was *The English Countryside* which was part of the Face of Britain series, a sustained acclamation of the variety of British scenery and countryside. Harry Batsford contributed the chapter on hills and wolds in which the Cotswolds appeared. Although he spoke initially about the whole band of oolitic limestone that stretches from Bath to the Wash, Batsford quickly reverted to an account of "the wold proper", roughly between Bath and Evesham. Like Bradley Ford, Batsford found it difficult to "set down in cold print the sway the Cotswold undoubtedly exercises" but again pointed to "the exhilarating contrasts" to be felt when he dropped off "the bare, rolling brown fields into a small, tree-dotted river dip".[77]

The introduction to Ward Lock's *The Cotswolds* made the point that, topographically, there was "hardly a scene [in the Cotswolds] which has not half a dozen counterparts in Sussex or Dorset" but the Cotswolds were distinguished by its "genius".[78] This was capable of raising a simple group of building, tree, field and stream to "a place of beauty which is matchless" but ultimately meant that the Cotswold scene defied analysis.[79] This was an aspect which intrigued Robert Henriques and to which he paid a great deal of attention in *The Cotswolds* published in 1950.

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[74]Ford, C.B., 1935, "The Cotswold Country and the West Midland Vales", *The Beauty of Britain - A Pictorial Survey*, London, B.T. Batsford Ltd, p.129.
[75]Beach Thomas, W., 1938, *The English Landscape*, London, Country Life Ltd., p.4.
[76]*Ibid.*, p.59.
[77]Batsford, H., 1939, "Hills and Wolds", *The English Countryside*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, p.111.
[78]Anonymous, c.1947, "Introduction", *Guide to the Cotswolds, with special sections of Natural Life and Antiquities*, Ward Lock and Co. Limited, p.11.
[79]*Ibid.*, p.11.

Robert David Quixano Henriques was born in 1905, educated at Rugby School and New College Oxford and served twenty years in the Royal Artillery before retiring and becoming the author of a number of novels and non-fictional works.[80] He lived in Cirencester - which was perhaps the reason why Clough and Amabel Williams Ellis, the editors of the Vision of England series, selected him to write the volume on the Cotswolds, illustrated with pencil drawings by Humphrey Spender.

Henriques subjected the Cotswolds to what he called "a sort of chemical analysis" of beauty, a "mathematical analysis of curves" that would reveal the answer to why one hill, one range of hills, one series of hills and valleys and intersections of contours, roads, dividing walls and hedges should be more beautiful than another.[81] He used an analogy of three Byzantine jars to illustrate this approach, explaining that of the three jugs, all made of the same material, colour and decoration with nothing to chose between them for ease of handling and pouring out, one was always identified as being more beautiful. It was the one whose curve was more satisfying. "This", he argued, "is what happens in the Cotswolds".

> By popular consent, perhaps by universal consent, it is a supremely beautiful countryside whose description demands superlatives... Its groups of trees have dignity, its valleys are intimate, and its uplands flow like a tide. But all this can be claimed for other parts of Britain, the sum of whose beauties is yet surpassed in the Cotswold Hills... One piece of country, which is no more useful than any other for yielding the fruits or the minerals of the earth, or for living in, is nevertheless the loveliest. It evokes the keenest and deepest emotions. It bestows the highest satisfaction.[82]

This was all a matter of design;

> So far as this landscape can be considered in terms of design, it can be said that the contours of the Cotswold hillsides are themselves graceful and distinctive, while the intersecting lines of roads, and of stone-tiled roofs and of stone walls... are peculiar to this countryside: peculiar with that sense of proper accomplishment, that sense of satisfaction... the design of the Cotswold hills is satisfying and tranquil.[83]

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[80]Biographical information on Robert Henriques from *Who was Who 1961-1970* supplied by the National Register of Archives, London.
[81]Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds*, Vision of England series edited by Williams Ellis, C. and Williams Ellis, A., Paul Elek, p.24.
[82]*Ibid.*, p.24-25.
[83]*Ibid.*, p.25.

These elements of line and intersection are visible in the pencil drawing of the Coln Valley from Spenders illustrations of the book (figure two).

Figure Two: The Coln Valley by Humphrey Spender

Like Timperley before him, Henriques' use of design principles to explain the charm of the Cotswolds ultimately faltered and he was forced to admit the area's ineffability;

> Within the invisible wall that is the Cotswold frontier there is a thing of great beauty which defies analysis. It is a country, a poem, an enchantment, a symphony, a prayer, a profession of faith, a state of contentment, an inevitable accident. It is all these things and many more, and my attempts to write about it are as futile as the attempts of the chemist to analyse the living earth.[84]

Notwithstanding this, the theme of contrast endured for Henriques. "To see the valley in its relation to the upland tillage, encircling with its glittering coils the windy hills and the high barns. That is what matters" he wrote.[85]

[84] *Ibid.*, p.54.
[85] *Ibid.*, p.72.

In this section I have shown how the Cotswolds were defined through contrast to the neighbouring Severn Vale and by reference to a unique combination of contrasting landscapes within its own boundaries. In the next section I will show how these representations precisely contest the relevance of the South Country as a way of explaining the discovery of rural England in the first half of the twentieth century.

Finding England Everywhere

In chapter three I began an argument that continues throughout this thesis; that the notion of the South Country is not a useful way of conceptualising constructions of Englishness between 1880 and 1950. In this chapter I have shown that Cotswold landscapes were sometimes regarded with ambivalence and even hostility. Yet the area could still be evoked as an example of an ideal England. Clare Cameron spoke of the "calm English landscape beneath a smiling sky"[86] whilst Sidney Moorehouse pointed out that the Cotswolds "reflect the spirit of that very England we strive to maintain".[87] If the South Country was as pervasive and important an idea as Howkins and Chase would have us believe, why didn't an area described as "a bit of real old England" fit? The answer is that generalised and stereotyped landscapes were not what people were looking for when they went in search of rural England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the contrary they were looking for and finding England everywhere at a very local level.

This might seem to fly in the face of some of the arguments I have made in this chapter about the contrast between the Severn Vale and the Cotswolds and finding ideal pastoral landscapes in the valleys between the high wolds. However in this chapter I have also identified important *changes* of attitude - that the Cotswolds ceased to be defined against a supposedly more authentic English landscape of the Severn Vale and the uplands became as attractive as recognisably pastoral landscapes in the valleys. In effect the individuality of the Cotswolds, its regional character, became a more

[86]Cameron, C., 1930, *Green Fields of England - A Book of Footpath Travels*, Constable and Co. Ltd., p.54.
[87]Moorehouse, S., 1940, "Autumn Beauty of the Cotswolds", *The Field*, November 30, p.706.

important focus for celebration than its pockets of pastoral. I would argue that this is part of a broader trend of celebrating regional character and, simultaneously, defining England by its rich variety of landscapes and people. The notion of the South Country has disguised this and has given us a short-sighted, inflexible and limited understanding of how rural England and Englishness were being created and constructed. The next section shows that the notion of finding England everywhere is clearly present in non-fictional rural writing.

The Middle Landscape and Finding England Everywhere

In 1938 in his book *The English Landscape* William Beach Thomas argued that what was English was topographically vague but that the intense Englishness of the Midland vale was due to the scenery having been made by nature and by man.[88] Beach Thomas was not alone in his appreciation of cultivated, lightly populated landscapes. Rich maintains that "the English landscape appeared as a quintessentially tranquil and tended *middle landscape*"[89] (italics added) which Leo Marx has designated as the ideal compromise between the lonely and remote wilderness and the urbanised landscape of the city.[90] The idea of a middle landscape describes a broad ideal without reference to a *specific* topography or location and therefore allows that celebrations of diverse regional landscapes were an important ingredient of Englishness. The idea of the middle landscape is developed in the next chapter. Here I wish to focus on how England was "found" in diverse regional landscapes.

Celebrations of regional identity were taking place in the wide range of topographical books published in the interwar years, particularly in the range of Batsford Books. As I showed in chapter three, Chase uses the list of books in the Face of Britain series to support his argument about the South Country. However, a close look at the list of books in that series (figure 3) shows good coverage of England, including places not associated with the south country like Lincolnshire, Lancashire, the North Midlands and the English Lakeland. In addition, The *Beauty of Britain* and *The English*

[88]Beach Thomas, W., 1938, *The English Landscape*, Country Life Ltd.
[89]Rich, P., 1987, "The Quest for Englishness", *History Today*, Vol 37, p.28.

Countryside, two more of Batsford's topographical works, had chapters on coastline, chalk country, weald, ridge and down, fenland, northern moors, dales and wolds, lakes and fells, sands and heaths - just about every topography visible in Britain and England.[91] In writing the foreword to *The Beauty of Britain* Charles Bradley Ford was confident that

> whilst our divisions are broad in the geographical sense, paying little heed to county boundaries, each of them represents an area... possessed of a beauty and individuality which it has been the aim of both writer and photographer to record.[92]

These Batsford books were complemented by *The Legacy of England* in which Edmund Blunden, Adrian Bell and others roamed across England appreciating the wide variety of farms, villages, country houses, country towns, churches and inns that they found there.[93] Other publishers were turning out similar books. S.P.B Mais set the tone of *Round About England*, published by Richards, with a quotation from Thomas Hutton placed on the title page. It read "know most of the rooms of thy native country before thou goest over the threshold thereof; especially as seeing England presents thee with so many observables".[94] Thomas Burke, writing in *The Beauty of England* - a Country Life book - reflected that the variety of English countryside offered itself in a "series of packets - Little Englands". Each time one came upon a new view, "one may say every time, and truthfully, "Here is England". And fifteen miles beyond lies another tight little packet which also is England".[95]

Topographers and non-fictional rural writers were perhaps encouraged to identify the rich diversity of England's landscapes and people by Stanley Baldwin who, in another part of his oft-quoted speech on England, called upon the members of the Royal Society of St. George to preserve the English people's diversified individuality.

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[90]Marx, L., 1967, *The Machine in the Garden - Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, Oxford University Press.
[91]Priestley, J.B. *et al.*, 1935, *The Beauty of Britain*, B.T. Batsford Ltd; Massingham, H.J. *et al.* 1939, *The English Countryside*, B.T. Batsford Ltd.
[92]Ford, C.B., 1935, "Foreword", *The Beauty of Britain - A Pictorial Survey*, London, B.T. Batsford Ltd, p.v.
[93]Blunden, E. *et al.*, 1930, *The Legacy of England*, B.T. Batsford Ltd.
[94]Mais, S.P.B., 1935, *Round About England*, Richards, title page.
[95]Burke, T., 1933, The Beauty of England, George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., p.16, 17.

> Let us see to it that we never allow our individuality as Englishmen to be steam-rollered. The preservation of the individuality of the Englishman is essential to the preservation of the type of the race, and if our differences are smoothed out and we loose that great gift, we shall lose at the same time our power.[96]

Writing in 1935 in *England Speaks*, Phillip Gibbs also remarked that "we are still a nation of individualists".[97]

Figure Three: Books in the Batsford "Face of Britain" Series

English Lakeland	Doreen Wallace
Cotswold Country	H.J. Massingham
Chiltern Country	H.J. Massingham
The West of England	R. Manning Sanders
English Downland	H.J. Massingham
The Highlands of Scotland	Hugh Quigley
The Lowlands of Scotland	George Scott-Montcrieff
The Face of Ireland	Michael Floyd
Welsh Border Country	P.T. Jones
Shakespeare's Country	John Russell
North Midland Country	J.H. Ingham
Midland England	W.G. Hoskins
Wessex	Ralph Dutton
The Face of Wales	Tudor Edwards
The Home Counties	S.P.B. Mais
Scottish Border Country	F.R. Banks
South East England	Richard Wyndham
Lancashire and the Pennines	Frank Singleton
Lincolnshire and the Fens	M.W. Barley

Individuality was a key theme of A.K. Wickham's *The Villages of England* and Humphrey Pakington's *English Villages and Hamlets*, both products of the Batsford publishing house.[98] Pakington's book examined villages in the Home Counties, the south west, East Anglia, the north and other regions defined by their indigenous building material which he called "the stone belt" and "red brick and black and white". Wickham's book was also organised on a regional basis and suggested that "place, date

[96]Baldwin, S., 1926, "England", *On England and other Addresses*, Phillip Allan and Co. Ltd., p.5.
[97]Gibbs, P., 1935, *England Speaks*, Giles, J. and Middleton, T., 1995, *Writing Englishness, 1900-1950*, Routledge, p.33.
[98]Pakington, H., 1934, *English Villages and Hamlets*, B.T. Batsford Ltd; Wickham, A.K., 1932, *The Villages of England*, B.T. Batsford Ltd.

and individual genius" were the reasons for the wide variety of English villages. The idea of a middle landscape appealed to Wickham who argued that

> There are some countries, like Scotland, which God has made beautiful but to which the natives have added little of beauty themselves. There are others, like the province of Holland, to which God has given the skies and much water and a little foundation, and which owe everything else of beauty... to the generations who have lived and worked there. Between these extremes, within the pale of European civilisation, stands... our land of England. It was not a bleak and watery land before civilised man set his mark upon it, but it was not a land which without him would count for much... In the measure in which our love of England is fed by a love of beauty, it is the harmony between the work of nature and of men which we here appreciate.[99]

Wickham went on to point out that the English village in particular distinguished the English landscape from any other. I will say more about the English village in the next chapter; here I wish to leave Wickham roaming across the "middle landscape" of the chalk and clay, the limestone belt, the western midlands, the south-west and the north without an ideological map of the "south country" and return for a moment to the Cotswolds.

In his autobiography, *Remembrance*, H.J. Massingham reflected that the Cotswolds had inspired him to "the regional idea" and set him writing topographical books for his friend Harry Batsford whose firm had "brought the sense of England, the true England, home to Englishmen".[100] The Cotswolds offered Massingham

> a perfect example of regionalism both in space and time... A traditional man on Cotswold acted very much like his neighbours in other regions, and yet there is a quality, an independent and original value which was his very own. Such is the virtue of regionalism, as, in the community of human life, it is of the individual.[101]

This "vision" of regionalism lead Massingham to write topographical books because that seemed the "only way of conveying the sense of place and, through that, of the real, the ultimate England".[102] As this and later chapters show, notions of individuality,

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[99]*Ibid.*, p.1.
[100]Massingham, H.J., 1941, *Remembrance*, B.T. Batsford Ltd., p.82.
[101]*Ibid.*, p.82.
[102]*Ibid.*, p.82.

difference and boundedness clearly informed representations of the Cotswolds as unique whilst simultaneously marking them out as a version of an ideal England.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the Cotswolds as a unique place and set of places, constructed in part through contrast between the neighbouring landscape of the Severn Vale and between the Cotswold upland and valleys. Changes in the emotional and imaginative responses to the Cotswolds seem to be part of a movement away from idealising pastoral landscapes and towards commemorating regional identity and difference - a process which I have called finding England everywhere. In the following chapters I will develop this argument further by showing that the construction of the Cotswolds' regional identity and English national identity were intimately related. The next chapter examines this relationship through the Garden of Stone - a way of describing the Cotswolds that was used in both written and visual representations of the area which resonated in some representations of Englishness.

Chapter Five

In the Garden of Stone

> When society is functioning correctly, the garden stands for order, reconciliation and harmony. Outside is a place where the world teems, where nothing may be controlled except by the imagination. When a man has part of the world under his hand, to re-order it as something according to his own nature, it becomes like a painting or a poem. His conscious actions are not all like the unconscious effects of mists and mountains. The random landscape does not easily yield up its meanings, but the gardener, like the painter, selects, discards and rearranges, revising as he goes. Enclosing part of the landscape, he makes of it his own world.[1]

In the last chapter I examined representations of the Cotswolds as a land of contrast and introduced the idea of middle landscape. In this chapter I wish to develop this concept heuristically through the "garden of stone" metaphor which recurs in non-fictional rural writing, guide books and poetry about the Cotswolds from around 1900, reaching a peak in the interwar years. In examining the "garden of stone" metaphor I will synthesise primary source evidence with work on the multiple symbolism of the garden to show how the garden of stone metaphor has manifold readings and meanings. In the section entitled "The Gracious Garden of the Wold" I will show that different, though not necessarily contrasting, ideas of the garden are can be read in the garden of stone metaphor. The next section considers the symbolic qualities of the other aspect of the metaphor, the stone, in some depth. I will also consider the garden of stone metaphor in the context of representations of England as composed of organic communities in the third section. This chapter therefore considers both the aesthetic representations of the nation and the "imagined grounding of a nation in a particular environment and the presumed moral attributes of that environment".[2] In the last part of the chapter I demonstrate the role of rural and garden imagery in promoting the spread of suburbs which were seen to damage the very landscapes that were part of their attraction.

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[1]Neve, C., 1990, *Unquiet Landscape - Places and Ideas in Twentieth Century English* Painting, Faber and Faber, p.49.

[2]Gruffudd, P., 1994, "Back to the land: historiography, rurality and the nation in interwar Wales", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 19, p.61.

This chapter is predicated on the understanding that the garden is a repository and generator of meaning and value. Francis and Hester have argued that as an idea, the garden is part of traditional and modern social thought and has long served as

> a way of thinking about nature and about culture and how each influences the other. The garden has been viewed philosophically as the balancing point between human control on one hand and wild nature on the other. The garden has represented safety from the threat of wild nature or escape from barbarian outsiders. The garden has been nature under control, an idealisation of what society believed that nature should be and should look like.[3]

Curiously they go on to suggest that gardens as powerful settings for human life transcend time, place and culture.[4] This is a statement with which I fundamentally disagree. Rather, gardens are precisely located in time, place and culture - in Hunt's words, "Gardens mean rather than are", they are composed of signs to be read for what they tell of a certain society.[5] Treib has further argued that "throughout history, the garden has served two primary purposes: as a zone of modulated and intensified sensual experience and as a vehicle for expressing symbolic, political, and religious ideas beyond the realm of its tangible materials".[6] I will show that both these purposes are expressed in the Cotswold garden of stone.

Hunt has argued that "gardens are exercises in invented tradition - they are created, adapted, or used to provide spaces and forms of a ritual or symbolic nature that inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour having an implied continuity with the past".[7] In some of its constructions the garden of stone functions precisely to asseverate a powerfully symbolic organic community on the verge of being destroyed. Hunt has further argued that "some of the most conspicuous examples of invented garden

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[3]Francis, M. and Hester, R.T. Jnr (eds), 1991, "The Garden as Idea, Place and Action", *The Meaning of Gardens - Idea, Place and Action*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, p.2.
[4]*Ibid.*
[5]Hunt, J.D., 1988, "The garden as cultural object", Wrede, D. and Adams, W.H. (eds), *Denatured Visions - Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, p.28.
[6]Treib, M., 1988, "Sources of significance: the garden in our time", Wrede, S. and Adams, W.H. (eds), *Denatured Visions - Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, p.106.
[7]Hunt, J.D., 1988, *op cit.*, p.19.

traditions will occur when society undergoes rapid transformation".[8] With, for instance, the cottage garden and the suburban garden, the garden of stone expresses a particular configuration of city-garden relationships which are underpinned by disquiet about a range of issues, among them industrialisation, urbanisation and 'progress'. What is important is that the concept of the garden was "plastic, people recognised the aesthetic appeal and semiotic possibilities of different kinds of garden"[9] - thus the garden of stone is only one version of a powerful idea and is itself fluid. As Dixon Hunt asserts,

> The garden is an inclusive realm. In it are concentrated a whole cluster of ideas and aspirations, some conscious and declared, others no less apparent for being unconscious. The appeal of mythology (Eden), the traditional purveying of messages - the winding primrose path (leading to the shed); a botanical treasure cabinet, garden as laboratory.[10]

As this chapter will show, the Cotswold garden of stone accommodated many of these meanings.

The garden of stone is simultaneously an idea, a place and an action. McHarg, writing about gardens more generally, has commented that

> One cannot examine a garden as a physical place without probing the ideas that generated the selection of its materials and the making of its geometry. One cannot fully understand the idea of the garden without knowing something about the process that created it. Also in the act of gardening reside both ideology and a desire to create physical order.[11]

Such issues also inform my unpacking of the garden of stone. Its construction was a matter of selection and exclusion of some aspects of the Cotswolds' character. It was created and recreated in the built form of the Cotswold village, the stone wall and the agricultural landscape, but also in guide books, non-fictional rural writing and other commentaries. The act of 'cultivating' the garden of stone was the subject of admiring, often wistful reflection on an organic society in the process of being lost. These are themes which will be developed through this chapter.

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[8]*Ibid.*, p.19.
[9]Waters, M., 1988, *The Garden in Victorian Literature*, Scholar Press, p.7.
[10]Hunt, J.D., 1988, *op cit.*, p.30-31.
[11]Francis, M. and Hester, R.T. Jnr (eds), 1991, *op cit.*, p.8.

The Gracious Garden of the Wold

The phrase 'garden of stone' first appeared in H.J. Massingham's *Wold Without End* in 1932. However, long before Massingham used the phrase (in a passage which I will examine shortly), garden imagery was resonating through writing on the Cotswolds, both in descriptions of an orderly floral landscape and in the less conventional idea of cultivating the stone.

Garden

In the last chapter I commented upon J. Arthur Gibbs' use of rich vibrant colours and bold similes to describe landscapes in his book *A Cotswold Village*. I wish to return to his uninhibited prose here in his description of the keen sports fisherman, who arrives in the Cotswolds from London.

> He has come into a new world - rather, I should say, a paradise; for he comes when meadows are green and trees are at their prime. Though the glory of the lilac has passed away, the buttercup still gilds the landscape; barley fields are bright with yellow charlock, and the soft, subdued glow of sainfoin gives colour to the breezy uplands as of acres of pink carnations. On one side a vast sheet of saffron, on the other a lake of rubies, ripples in the passing breeze, or breaks into rolling waves of light and shade as the fleecy clouds sweep across azure skies. He comes when roses, pink and white and red, are just beginning to hang their dainty heads in modest beauty on every cottage wall or cluster round the ancient porch; when from every lattice window in the hamlet rows of red geraniums peep from their brown pots of terra-cotta, brightening the street without, and filling the cosy rooms with grateful, unaccustomed fragrance; when the scent of the sweet, short-lived honeysuckle pervades the atmosphere, and the faces of the handsome peasants are bronzed as those of dusty dwellers under Italian skies.[12]

I wish to leave aside for a moment the allusion to paradise, to which I will return shortly, and concentrate on other aspects of Gibbs' description. Ian McHarg has argued that gardens "combine both explicit and implicit statements of affirmation", the most dominant of which is that nature is benign. He points out that "usually docile, tractable, and floriferous plants are arrayed. Poisonous plants, animals and weeds are stringently

[12]Gibbs, J.A., 1988, *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, first published 1898, p.129-130.

excluded".[13] In J. Arthur Gibbs' *A Cotswold Village* nature is certainly benign, but the distinction between weeds and 'docile' plants is blurred, as is the boundary between the domestic garden and the wold, both of which have been cultivated either horticulturally or agriculturally.

It should not be a surprise to find the ostensibly 'natural' wolds described in terms of a garden. Hunt has argued that the *idea* of the garden can encompass a palpable gradation between culture and nature, from regular, highly organised garden spaces to more natural, less schematic groves.[14] The smudging of boundaries by Gibbs was also evident in P.H. Ditchfield's ideal rural dwelling in which the garden

> is rich with old-fashioned English flowers... It is set in a framework that enhances its beauty. Dark woods form the background. In front there is a village green... Other graceful dwellings cluster around the green, and the rude pond, wild hedgerows, and irregular plantations complete the picture.[15]

This was also a device used by William Morris in *News from Nowhere* in which he comes close to exposing the wildscape/garden distinction as one apparent only in capitalist societies where gardens are mostly private property, and the countryside is apparently 'open' and 'free'.[16] "In the variegated landscape of [Morris's] socialist utopia, gardens blend harmoniously with fields and forests, villages and clean, green cities" notes Waters.[17]

It is significant that the power of Gibbs' description relies on carefully selecting some aspects of the Cotswold character and excluding others. Barley fields on breezy uplands are favoured and any hint that the wolds could be "dull, bleak and uninteresting" is suppressed.[18] In the last chapter I suggested that the Cotswolds were defined by the contrasts that existed between the uplands, valleys and vale and here

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[13]McHarg, I.L., 1991, "Nature is more than a garden", Francis, M. and Hester, R.T. Jnr (eds), *The Meaning of Gardens - Idea, Place and Action*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, p.34.
[14]Hunt, J.D., 1988, *op cit.*
[15]Ditchfield, P.H., 1908, *The Charm of the English Village*, London, B.T. Batsford, p.49.
[16]Morris, W., 1941, *News from Nowhere or an Epoch of Rest*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., first published in 1890, p.103; Waters, M., 1988, *The Garden in Victorian Literature*, Scholar Press, p.183-184.
[17]*Ibid.*, p.183-184.
[18]Gibbs, J.A., 1988, *op cit.*, p.25.

those contrasts are reinforced by the softening or exclusion of inhospitable uplands in the garden analogy. I do not wish to rehearse the writing of Henry Branch, Herbert Evans and others in this chapter, but it is worth pointing out that in their descriptions of the Cotswold valleys in all their floriferous display, their pastoral verdure and abundance they were also constructing the Cotswolds as a bountiful and benign garden. This was also apparent in "Far from the Madding Crowd", an article contributed anonymously to *Building News and Engineering Journal* in 1910. Here the author describes the Cotswolds as the "Holy Land of our longings" beyond the unreal world where

> 'Everlasting spring abides, And never wither flowers'... We forget the stony fields and the muddy ways; but we remember the cottage wall golden with apricots in the sunshine, and the gardens sweet with lavender; the partings at the gate, the long green fields at night... And there, too, in late summer, when the glory of the year seems gone, and the apples are half-picked in the orchards, the meadows suddenly brighten once again with acre after acre of autumnal crocuses, and the roadside hedges here and there grown fairer than in summer time with the berries of that rose-coloured spindle tree 'which in our English woodland seems a flower'. Above us is Stow Hill, long, steep, and lovely, with larch woods on the left side and beech trees on the other. Both woods are enclosed with low, rough, stone walls, such as fence off the fields here in the Cotswolds, and carpeted with periwinkles, amongst which lies open many a little quarry or 'quar'.[19]

Such descriptions from Gibbs, Ditchfield and others may trace their roots back to what Waters calls the "homely picturesque" which was particularly evident in some Victorian literature from the 1830s onwards.[20] He argues that 'picturesque' became steadily detached from its provenance in an eighteenth century cult and drained of its "referential specificity", instead acquiring an increasingly wide currency and extension of its range. Thus the "artless artistry" of the homely cottage garden was favoured against the picturesque in its "excessively embellished or its tumbledown forms".[21] "Far from rejecting 'picturesque' because of its cultish associations", he concludes, "many novelists exploited and enhanced its felicitous connotations, relocated it within the humanised landscape, and applied it, it would seem, to just about any garden for which

[19]Anonymous, 1910, "Far from the Madding Crowd", *Building News and Engineering Journal*, August 26, Vol XCIX, Number 2903, p.281.
[20]Waters, M., 1988, *op cit.*, p.81.
[21]Michael Waters, 1988, *op cit.*, p.81.

they hoped to elicit a positive response".[22] Cottage and farmhouse gardens furnished perfect subjects for fictional and non-fictional prose idylls, developed between the 1820s and 1840s in, for instance, the work of Mary Mitford and William Howitt, and popular for long after.[23] The similarity between Ditchfield's description of an ideal rural dwelling (above) and the following passage from William Howitt's *Rural Life of England*, the latter written some seventy years before the former, is striking:

> There on the edges of the forests, in quiet hamlets and sweet wooded valleys, the little grey-thatched cottages, with their gardens and old orchards, their rows of beehives, and their porches clustered with jasmines and roses, stand...[24]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries writers like Gibbs and Ditchfield extended the language of the homely picturesque to landscapes beyond the domestic sphere to describe Cotswold scenes as orderly if exuberant. And whilst the picturesque may be absent from A.M. Ware's poem *The Cotswolds* (1938), the blurring of uncultivated and cultivated space is still evident in this stanza:

> I sing of stone walls growing old,
> Grey, patient walls that wearied hands
> Have built to clasp the pasture lands
> And gracious gardens of the wold.[25]

Here the gracious gardens of the wold are not necessarily domestic cottage gardens but the little vales, marshy spots and "beechwood's pillared spaces" of an earlier stanza.

H.J. Massingham found cause to reflect on the relationship between his own back garden and the wold in 1932:

> The beauty of this minute garden is not in its individual flowers so much as that all of them represent a kind of heightened nature and yet none of them depart from nature... The garden is so close to nature, with the slope of the hill and the great wood around it, and the ancient moss-grown wall with its diminutive sedums, and the willows and tall grasses of the mound, that it seems tossed from

[22]*Ibid.*, p.93.
[23]*Ibid.*
[24]Howitt, W., 1844, *The Rural Life of England*, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, first published in 1838. Quoted in Waters, M., 1988, *op cit.*, p.82.
[25]Ware, A.M., 1938, "The Cotswolds", *The Gloucestershire Countryside*, Volume 3, Number 3, April 1938, p.317.

> the lap of nature and yet is planned and patterned enough by human foster-thought to be her changeling. The unity between man and nature, which all Cotswold tells, this garden models in miniature.[26]

The unity between man and nature which Massingham identifies as an essential feature of the Cotswolds speaks directly to the idea of a middle landscape as a place where nature and culture are balanced. Cosgrove has pointed out that "both in time and space the process of social life and its corresponding landscapes are seen to move from the organic, wild and unformed towards the inorganic, controlled and ordered as ever-greater human intervention reweaves the Gaiain veil".[27] This process, argues Cosgrove, is cyclical. The garden is a middle landscape evoked to hold back progress through the cycle. Calling the Cotswolds a garden of stone indicated where Massingham and others would ideally be in that cycle, where they could fix their condition if they could. It challenges the seeming inevitability of progress with the symbolic stability of the garden. It sets the intimacy and individuality of the garden against impersonal mechanisation and mass production, seemingly high speed change, and the feelings of insecurity and neurosis this engendered. As Cosgrove explains, "the middle landscape is that of the garden, of cultivated and lovingly controlled nature which, as we have noted, represented the marriage of Apollonian and Dionysian forces and thus the firmest basis of human community".[28] Some of these issues are revisited later in this chapter.

I would question some aspects of Cosgrove's example of his wilderness/garden/culture configuration. In this he describes London as the seat of corruption, beyond which lies "the mythical English landscape" with the wilderness represented by the upland areas of Britain.[29] He argues that "the mythical English landscape is drawn from a highly localised region: the lowland counties in the south and east of the island... at best from the 'clouded hills', and dales of northern limestone".[30] Whilst I agree with Cosgrove's thesis and also advocate that a "fragile middle landscape of mythical harmony between society and nature, [was] frequently projected as the

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[26]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *Wold Without End*, Cobden Sanderson, p.140.
[27]Cosgrove, D., 1993, "Landscapes and myths, gods and humans", Bender, B. (ed), *Landscape - Politics and Perspectives*, Berg Publishers, p.290-291.
[28]*Ibid.*, p.291.
[29]*Ibid.*, p.299.
[30]*Ibid.*, p.299.

authentic landscape of all Britain", I reject the idea that this landscape was that of the South Country - an argument developed in this thesis.

In other respects, Cosgrove's thesis is sound. Undoubtedly, the garden had advantages over the country as a counter-image to, for instance, the oppressive industrial city, providing "a more focused and potentially more realisable model of innocence and tranquillity upon which the inner eye could fix its yearnings".[31] Hence Kipling's comment "our England is a garden" and William Morris's hope for England to become again "the fair green garden of Northern Europe".[32] In the post-revolutionary era of *News from Nowhere*, England "is a garden, where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt".[33] In William Beach Thomas's present the Garden of England was to be found in Kent.[34] Thus garden imagery carried in it an idea of Englishness which empowered the use of the garden analogy in the Cotswolds. And, as Francis and Hester remark, "the garden is a metaphor that provokes unmatched insights".[35] Being in the garden of stone is a passive, comptemplative experience in which England and Englishness can be reflected upon. Although Beach Thomas was able to maintain that "what you do not find [in the Cotswolds] is the gentle, warm, garden-like appearance that belongs to farm and fields in the counties where hedgerows prevail", his was a lone voice of dissent.[36]

Elysium

Now I want to move into a more spiritual realm, for the Cotswolds were also associated with the Garden of Eden and other sites of biblical significance, constructed as an earthly rather than celestial paradise.

In 1892 Ernest Belcher called the Cotswolds "a new Canaan, a land of promise"[37] and in 1907 Henry Branch spoke of a "gradual ascent, and then, over the crest of the 'pitch', as we say in Gloucestershire, the adventurous traveller finds himself

[31]Waters, M., 1988, *op cit.*, p.186.
[32]Wiener, M., 1981, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*, Penguin, p.58.
[33]Morris, W., 1941, *op cit.*, p.101.
[34]Beach Thomas, W., 1946, *A Countryman's Creed*, London, Michael Joseph Ltd.
[35]Francis, M. and Hester, R.T., Jnr (eds), 1991, *op cit.*, p.19.
[36]Beach Thomas, W., 1938, *The English Landscape*, London, Country Life Ltd., p.59.

in a Rural Paradise".[38] The combination of ascent and arrival in paradise in this fragment from Branch emphasises the allusion to heaven. The relationship between the Cotswolds and the Vales of Evesham and Severn, which I examined in the last chapter, was again emphasised by James John Hissey who described the Vale of Evesham as "a very land of Goshen".[39] But this was a description also used by H.J. Massingham to describe the whole band of oolitic limestone from Dorset to Lincolnshire (including the Cotswolds) in *Cotswold Country* published in 1937.[40] Appearing first in Genesis, the Land of Goshen was the region of the Egyptian Delta where Joseph sent Jacob and his family to settle so that he could protect them from the years of famine coming to Egypt.[41] Later, when Moses was prevented from leading the Israelites from Egypt, the Land of Goshen was protected from the plagues sent by God upon the Egyptians.[42] Thus Hissey and Massingham are evoking images of protection and sanctuary with a clear biblical provenance. The same is true of P.H. Ditchfield's use of specific biblical imagery.

Standing on the edge of the escarpment, Ditchfield hoped that "As [when] Moses from the heights of Pisgah gazed upon the whole length of the land that flowed with milk and honey, so perhaps our vision may be miraculously extended, so as to embrace all this lovely Cotswold Country, a land of calm delight and pure joy..."[43] Moses climbed Mount Pisgah after delivering his final address to the people of Israel on the eve of their entry into Canaan. From Mount Pisgah Moses was shown the whole of the promised land by God before he died.[44] Ditchfield was rueful because he could not travel further north, into the Vale, and east, further into the Cotswolds, on this particular trip. "We will from Birdlip height just glance at the towns and villages that lie before us" he wrote, "and sigh as Moses did when he was permitted to see the Promised Land, but was not allowed to go over thither".[45] Here the combination of Cotswold and

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[37]Belcher, E., 1892, *Rambles Among the Cotswolds*, Evesham, W. & H. Smith, p.11.
[38]Branch, H., 1907, *Cotswold and Vale: or glimpses of past and present in Gloucestershire*, Cheltenham, Norman Sawyer and Co., p.134.
[39]Hissey, J.J., 1913, *A Leisurely Tour in England*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, p.141.
[40]Massingham, H.J., 1937, *Cotswold Country*, B.T. Batsford.
[41]Genesis, chapter 45 verse 10 taken from the *Good News Bible*, 1976, Colins.
[42]Exodus, chapter 8 verse 22 taken from the *Good News Bible*, 1976, Colins.
[43]Ditchfield, P.H., 1920, *By-Ways in Berkshire and the Cotswolds*, London, Robert Scott, p.273.
[44]Deuteronomy, chapter 34 verses 1-4, taken from the *Good News Bible*, 1976, Colins.
[45]Ditchfield, P.H., 1920, *By-Ways in Berkshire and the Cotswolds*, London, Robert Scott, p.273-274.

Vale is important to Ditchfield's choice of analogy. Similarly, the title of J.W. Haines' article "Paradise" referred to the whole of Gloucestershire.

J.W. Haines contributed his article to the *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalist's Field Club* in 1923. In it he began by scorning the attraction of both secular and spiritual gardens, writing

> When God created man and woman, in order to keep them satisfied and happy He placed them in the Garden of Eden. This was the first mistake, for no one really wants to live in a garden. A garden is good as a rest cure, but is dull as the interest of a lifetime. One easily tires of a garden, its gravel walks, its lawns, its vegetables, its flower-beds, its clipped and ordered trees and shrubs, its ostentatious friendliness, its pretty helplessness, its calculated variety, its 'unvarying courtesy'. A man who wants to live in a garden may go to the Isle of Wight and sate himself, or to Kent if he prefer... he certainly will not choose my county.[46]

Haines is attacking what he sees as the excessively artificial and contrived appearance of the Isle of White and Kent as well as domestic gardens more generally. This is curious because he later urges his fellow members of the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club to utilise diverse ways in which to "explore this garden of ours"[47] - referring to Gloucestershire. For Haines it would appear that the delicate balance between nature and culture, which is epitomised in the garden that is Gloucestershire, has elsewhere been tipped too far in the direction of culture resulting in the over-cultivated regions to which he refers. He also argued that Gloucestershire was better and more interesting than the original Garden of Eden:

> God placed neither hills nor mountains in the Garden of Eden and He provided it with only four rivers! Now when God made Gloucestershire (and He not only made it, but, as the proverb proves, actually is *in* Gloucestershire) He ringed it about with rivers, gave to it a range beyond range of hills, and set upon its outskirts, for all good men to gaze upon, the gaunt, jagged Malverns, which, indeed are almost mountains in reality....[48]

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[46]Haines, J.W., 1923, "Paradise", *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalist's Field Club*, Volume XXI, part 3, p.201.
[47]*Ibid.*, p.201-204.
[48]*Ibid.*, p.201.

Perhaps this is a cool hyperbole designed to catch the reader's eye at the beginning of an article which is really about the wide range of scholarly and scientific methods available for exploring the county - among them archaeology, geology, ornithology, entomology and botany - suggesting that if Gloucestershire was not a spiritual or domestic garden, it was certainly a scientific one. But a page or two later Haines writes "in Gloucestershire and only Gloucestershire, is the true Paradise... Now it is this Paradise which our Society has the pleasure and privilege of exploring".[49] The biblical provenance of his description is still clear, investing the article with an curious combination of the secular and the sacred. The reason for this can perhaps be traced back to the mid nineteenth century.

The implications of Haines' comments are that the scholarly exploration of Gloucestershire was also a way of worshipping God. This was a the principle theme of the address of the first president of the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club, T.B.L. Baker, in 1849. He unambiguously stated that

> We seek a healthy, a most fascinating and (far more than either) a most holy study. For what is the study of Natural History but an approach to the Creator through his works? Nor do I believe that He who has charged us not only to read, but diligently to mark and learn the Bible, plain and distinct as much of it is, yet so deep in its wisdom that no man, however much he may have pored over it, will say that he has mastered it, and need study it no more; I cannot, I say, believe that He has given us those wonderful books of stone which lie in the earth, in which He has placed character, hard to be read indeed, at first, yet rewarding the patient investigator... I cannot believe that He has permitted us (for all knowledge comes only by His permission) to acquire the power of the microscope... had He not intended to convince us, by our own senses, that nothing which He was created can be called mean, and though the further we proceed in the study the more we find yet to be learned, yet with the sense of our own ignorance, increases also our sense of the wisdom of Him who is seen all over and in all His works. If we take up the study of Natural History with this feeling - and without such a feeling let none venture to approach it - the ultimate object of our Society is indeed a high one.[50]

Here Baker is likening the work of the Club to the close study of the Bible through which the scholar is awed and humbled by God's power. Admittedly this was written some seventy years before Haines published his article. However, a later president W.C.

[49] *Ibid.*, p.203-204.

Lucy thought Baker's address was important enough to reproduce in full in his history of the Cotteswold Naturalist's Field Club in 1888.[51] It is not, therefore, so surprising to find the mixture of the secular and the sacred in Haines' account. No such amalgam exists, though, in W.D. Vizard's uncompromising poem in which he looks across Gloucestershire from Wainlode Hill:

> A bit of Heaven once lost its way,
> And dropt on earth below;
> For do but look from Wainlode's Hill
> O'er all the land, and lo!
> Old Earth hath still her Paradise,
> Her Eden still hath she,
> Where angel's feet might walk at will,
> And God at e'en might be;
> You seem to hear the still small voice
> Out o'er the grassy lea.
>
> Look South, look East, the Cotswolds there
> Present themselves to you,
> And all the broad expanse of vale
> A panoramic view;
> Look Northwards; see, the Malverns kiss
> The clear cerulean sky,
> While to the West the Cambrian hills
> All faintly you descry,
> And nearer West the Channel seems
> As silver to the eye.[52]

Marcus has pointed out that virtually all cosmologies envisage an initial chaos out of which the cosmos emerges, often exemplified by "a myth of an undefiled place of unsurpassed peace and beauty - a garden or oasis - which, if one could but find it or perhaps reproduce it, would allow the seeker to live forever in perfect happiness".[53] These are sentiments reflected in the Goshen and Pisgah analogies in a biblical interpretation of the garden of stone.

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[50]Baker, T.B.L., 1888, "Presidential Address 1849", Lucy, W.C., *The Origin of the Cotteswold Club and an Epitome of the Proceedings from its Formation to May 1887*, John Bellows, Gloucester, p.3.

[51]Lucy, W.C., 1888, *The Origin of the Cotteswold Club and an Epitome of the Proceedings from its Formation to May 1887*, John Bellows, Gloucester.

[52]Vizard, W.D., 1926, *In the Valley of the Gods: A Nomadic Variorum*, W.W. Bastin and Sons, Printers and Publishers, Cheltenham, p.3-4.

[53]Marcus, C.C., 1991, "The garden as metaphor", Francis, M. and Hester, R.T. Jnr (eds), *The Meaning of Gardens - Idea, Place and Action*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, p.26.

Other authors were able to use religious imagery more casually, like the anonymous author of *Motor Runs in Mid Gloucestershire* who gushed that the Cotswolds were "a veritable paradise" and Alison Murray who entered "Paradise" near Painswick.[54] Mr. Prune, the hero of Richard Blake Brown's comic novel *Mr. Prune on Cotswold*, discovered this "seductive land of milk and honey" whilst trying to escape Mrs. Harem V. Spankey's weekend party.[55] Meanwhile, Sidney Moorehouse came to "the Promised Land of centuries" in the first months of the Second World War while Robert Henriques pointed out that "to stand in the inner Cotswolds is to feel the Creator kneading the country into shape with a loving thumb".[56]

The themes of spiritual journey and enlightenment also feature. H.J. Massingham was prone to speak of himself as a pilgrim, though if he can be said to have held any recognisable religious beliefs at all, his was a very pantheistic experience. Wright has called him an "English Shaman".[57] At the end of his search for his ideal Cotswold landscape Massingham reflected that "my journey seemed like an allegorical pilgrimage in which I had emerged from bewilderment into a high place where all things were set out in rich and explicit purpose".[58] On his first glimpse of the Coln Valley it seemed "apparelled in celestial light... its villages stolen stone by stone from the Earthly Paradise and its stream a tributary of the River of Life".[59]

John Moore, a gentleman writer, also felt himself to be on a pilgrimage when he visited the Cotswolds in 1937, but his journey - in mid winter - was almost an act of self flagellation. He set out to see if rough weather and high hills would cure him of his black mood:

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[54]Anonymous, 1928, *Motor Runs in Mid-Gloucestershire - Selected circular routes to Beauty Spots and Show Places*, specially compiled for Wicliffe Companies, Stroud and Cheltenham, J. Burrow and Co. Ltd. Cheltenham, p.5; Murray, A., 1930, *The Cotswolds*, Crypt House Pocket Series published by the British Publishing Co. Ltd., Crypt House Press, Gloucester and London, illustrated by J.J. Gardiner, p.95.

[55]Blake Brown, R., 1938, *Mr. Prune on Cotswold*, London, Martin Secker, p.26.

[56]Moorehouse, S., 1940, "Autumn Beauty of the Cotswolds", *The Field*, November 30, p.706; Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds* with drawings by Humphrey Spender, Vision of England series edited by Clough and Amabel Williams Ellis, London, Paul Elek, p.31.

[57]Wright, P., 1995, *The Village that Died for England - the Strange Story of Tyneham*, London, Jonathan Cape, p.111.

[58]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p. 50.

[59]*Ibid.*, p.212.

> If I say that my winter walk was a indeed a sort of pilgrimage you will think of me as a romantic young man... Yet I think I have never felt less romantic than I did that day. The north-east wind was not more bitter, the frozen ponds were not blacker than my mood. You may conjecture, if you like, what was to blame for it: too much London, debts, too many cocktails, a love-affair that wouldn't go right, a novel that wouldn't sell, the growing conviction that the world was stark mad and that within a few years I should probably be blown to bits for some cause in which I did not believe.[60]

In the Cotswolds he was in search of "heartsease... at some shrine, some temple, some holy hill, some quiet place where the unquiet heart might be at peace again".[61] Treib has argued that the zone of the garden offers an alternative place which embodies "an aspiration for physical need, or social and metaphysical striving".[62] Moore finds in the Cotswolds an alternative to the superficial life he leads in London and also the threat of war that infests the Capital. But there was another side to his use of spiritual imagery. Commenting upon the absence of "alien" building styles and materials in the Cotswolds he observed that

> If a man built here with red brick and roofed with Welsh slates, his house would seem to shout its loneliness and terror across the great grey hills, it would be as if one of Beelzebub's crew had suddenly found himself by accident strayed into heaven, and stood abashed there, horribly aware of his cloven hoofs, his forked tail, his betraying horns, that made him so conspicuous among the harps and halos.[63]

This description resonates with others which use imagery with biblical connotations to illustrate the spread of ribbon development into the countryside. Moore himself spoke of the "tracks of the beast" across the Cotswolds in his essay in *Britain and the Beast* - a book replete with such references.[64] Meanwhile Thomas Burke called bungalow towns a "clumsy alter to holy English soil" in *The Beauty of England*.[65] The notion of paradise has been reworked here to suit the context of the argument it serves.

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[60]Moore, J., 1937, *The Cotswolds*, with illustrations by Barrington Browne, London, Chapman and Hall Ltd., p.4.
[61]*Ibid.*, p.6.
[62]Treib, M., 1988, *op cit.*, p.106.
[63]Moore, J., 1937, *op cit.*, p.16-17.
[64]Moore, J., 1938, "The Cotswolds", Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Reader's Union by arrangement with J. Dent and Sons Ltd., p.88.
[65]Burke, T., 1933, *The Beauty of England*, London, George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., p.21.

Now I wish to turn to the second and perhaps the most powerful component of the garden of stone metaphor; the stone.

Stone

The Cotswold stone was felt to be one of the vital elements in the character of the Cotswolds. H.J. Massingham called it the "mighty mother of the Cotswold heritage".[66] But significantly, the garden of stone metaphor speaks not only to the stone in its unquarried form but to its use in the cottages, manor houses, villages, walls and barns of the region. The garden of stone is a place where stone has been *cultivated* into architectural rather than floriferous display. Like a domestic garden it has been cleared, colonised, and enabled by hard work and skill. Because of this I do not intend to talk about the relationship between the Cotswolds and the rest of the band of oolitic limestone stretching to the Wash.

Let me return here though to H.J. Massingham's first use of the phrase garden of stone in *Wold Without End* from 1932.

> What... is the explanation for the peculiar democratic beauty of Campden and, indeed, of all true Cotswold villages? On Cotswold, the barns are like churches and the churches like barns, the wool staplers' halls are more often of the cottage than the manor-house breed, while the great majority of the grey dwellings that flower the Cotswold dips were built for the sons of the soil... Neither utility nor responsive raw material nor propensity can altogether account for this great garden of stone which is Cotswold. For months I have felt in my bones that the cause must have been a wider and deeper one - the removal of social inhibitions, the natural associations of artistic feeling with daily doings, some measure of awakened joy, life and freedom - only these or causes allied to these could have planned and cultivated that Cotswold garden of stone.[67]

Here Massingham draws together four principle ideas that informed people's understanding of Cotswold architecture and stone work. First, utility. Aspects of the Cotswolds' vernacular architecture were vital to the utility of the building. Very steeply pitched roofs were designed to let rainwater run away rapidly and in other respects

[66]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.157.

building design was adapted to allow the exclusive use of stone - the only readily available local building material. The scarcity of iron and lead, for instance, meant that houses were designed to have as little guttering and metal work as possible.[68] Second, the responsive raw material. Once quarried, Cotswold stone is easy to work but hardens when weathered. Third, propensity, by which Massingham means the tendency for stone masons and craftsmen - and they were usually men - to invest their work with skill and pride, enjoying "the reward of creation for labour" as William Morris had it in *News from Nowhere*.[69] Importantly, these three ideas also had more fanciful interpretations, hinted at by the notion of grey dwellings "flowering the dips". Fourth, Massingham's "wider and deeper cause" - the happy configuration of art and every day life and the resulting state of mind enjoyed by the "sons of the soil". That phrase - "sons of the soil" - indicates that this fortunate existence was led by the members of an organic community. It is important to remember in what follows that these ideas, with both their practical and fanciful interpretations, are at work simultaneously.

Of course, the stone and architecture of the Cotswolds had been a focus of attention for some time before Massingham was writing. Massingham's four themes were present in William Morris' descriptions of a Cotswold cottage which also includes the idea of growth that is so central to the garden of stone metaphor.

> Though my words may give you no idea of any special charm about it, yet I assure you that the charm is there; the old house has grown up out of the soil and the lives of those who have lived in it; it needed no grand office-architect, with no greater longing for anything else than correctness a certain amount (not too much let us hope) of common sense, a liking for making materials serve one's turn, and, perhaps, at the bottom a little grain of sentiment.[70]

In his "Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation" Morris spoke of the Cotswold cottage as "a work of art and a piece of nature".[71] Guy Dawber, an architect, wrote a number of pieces on Cotswold architecture in the last years of the nineteenth century and was,

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[67]*Ibid.*, p.15-16.
[68]Hissey, J.J., 1913, *op cit.*, p.135.
[69]Morris, W., 1941, *op cit.*, p.126.
[70]Morris, W. quoted by Hissey, J.J., 1908, *An English Holiday with Car and Camera*, Macmillan and Co, London, p.236-237. Original source not given.
[71]Morris, W., "Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation" quoted by Anonymous, 1910, "The Passing of Cotswold Architecture", *The Builder*, May 21, p.587.

like Morris, impressed by its characteristic "fitness of purpose and simplicity of expression".[72] The utility of Cotswold buildings was pretty high up on Dawber's list of their attractions but he was not insensible to their less tangible qualities. "The indigenous way in which the old builders used the stone excites our warmest admiration" he wrote in 1896 and he roundly condemned the "rage for 'improving' everything" which was sweeping away "the dwellings of our ancestors, so closely interwoven with the life and history of the country, and possessing such intensely human interest".[73] He went on to hint at Massingham's "wider and deeper cause", arguing that

> Life must have been lived under sweeter, healthier, and more leisured conditions than those which now prevail, for surely men who thought out and fashioned dwellings such as these must have been happy in their existence and in creating such lasting memorials to their skill and care. They built because they loved their work...[74]

Henry Branch was also enarmoured by the beauty in the simple utility of the Cotswold building. He concluded his brief description of a Cotswold house "built of local materials, by local men" by pointing out that "by simplicity of character, admirable proportions, large amount of plain wall surface, and the entire absence of carving, forms a marked contrast to much of the work to-day, with its restlessness, untruths and meretricious ornament".[75] Interestingly such characteristics were found to be singularly *English* by James John Hissey who commented that the Cotswold building was "an essentially English style of house wherein there is no manifest striving after the picturesque. A house symmetrical and well proportioned that pleases the eye by its look of solidarity, as though designed to withstand both time and tempest. What picturesqueness it possesses comes without being sought after".[76] The houses seemed

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[72]Dawber, G., 1885, "Some Thoughts on Old English Architecture, with Special Reference to the Cotswolds", *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 1895-1996, Volume XX, p.316.
[73]Dawber, G., 1896, "Some Cotswold Villages and a Few Reflections", *Architecture*, Volume 1, Number 11, December 1896, p.543; Dawber, G., 1985, *op cit.*, p.316.
[74]Guy Dawber, 1896, *op cit.*, p.547 & 552.
[75]Branch, H., *op cit.*, p.193.
[76]Hissey, J.J., 1908, *op cit.*, p.232-233.

to form "part and parcel of the rock on which they stand, as though they had grown up from it",[77] in complete contrast to more modern constructions:

> The modern 'desirable' villa, or mansion, never gives me this pleasing sentiment of home: it too often seeks to be picturesque by studied quaintness that betrays its aim and so defeats its object, and by stuck-on ornaments that fail to adorn, it lacks the repose that comes of simpleness; it looks as though it were built to attract the eye... Alas! we seem to have lost the art of building simply and beautifully... The old time builder was generally content to let his exterior be the outward expression of interior requirements, and trusted to honesty of purpose his architectural effect.[78]

Here is another of Massingham's themes; the propensity of the builder or craftsman to build unassuming, modest, utilitarian dwellings. This Hissey attributed to the builders' "artistic feeling" and "inherent good taste".[79] P.H. Ditchfield put it down to their "commune with Nature".[80] Algernon Gissing was even more explicit, proposing that "the stone itself apparently inspired the rustic craftsmen in their genius for its consummate handling. This genius grew from the soil and is as native and peculiar to it as the very flowers that beautify its surface".[81]

The notion that the stone itself influenced the mason to build lovely and appropriate dwellings that harmonised with the landscape is one of the most important in the construction of the garden of stone metaphor. It cast a new light on the ideas of utility, the responsiveness of the raw material and the inclinations of craftsmen by suggesting that each naturally resulted where people were in close contact with the stone and the soil or what G. Llewellyn Morris called "the unity between the soil, the dwelling and its inhabitants"[82] - hence the pervasive imagery of houses "growing" straight from the earth. "An old Cotswold cottage is so admirably in tone with its setting that it seems to be a growth rather than a piece of building work" commented Alison Murray in 1931. H.W. Timperley, sensitive to the Cotswold's upland mood, felt

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[77]Hissey, J.J., 1913, *op cit.*, p.135.
[78]Hissey, J.J., 1908, op *cit.*, p.236.
[79]*Ibid.*, p.340-341.
[80]Ditchfield, P.H., 1993, *Rural England - Cottage and Village Life*, Bracken Books, first published in 1912 by J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, p.5.
[81]Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, p.84.
[82]Llewellyn Morris, G., 1906-1907, writing in *The Studio*, Winter 1906-1907, p.88. Quoted in Wickham, A.K., 1932, *The Villages of England*, B.T. Batsford Ltd., p.37.

> the upland aloofness spreading into the town [of Chipping Campden] then, as though it were quietly renewing its life through closer contact with its own world. The stone seemed to be reaffirming its kinship with all the unquarried stone of the hills, and to be saying that though it had given itself to the hands of loving craftsmen, it was no more theirs than the lichen creeping over it.[83]

He repeated these sentiments in his introduction to the short guide book *Broadway and the Cotswolds* in 1933 in which he reflected that Cotswold villages were indistinguishable from the surrounding countryside. "The colour of the stone does not help them show up clearly from afar..." he wrote, "whatever its position, a Cotswold village always rests in its setting as though nature, not man, had placed it there".[84] A.K. Wickham was yet more evocative in his use of the metaphor:

> The human habitations in these valleys, and yet more on the hill-tops... are like a natural symphony in stone; it seem everywhere to come gently though the soil, grow into floors, walls, roofs and chimneys, and make as natural a shelter for men as the abundant pasture on the hills makes food for their flocks... We do not, as in East Anglia, or in Kent, admire an ingenious selection of various elements and their conjunction in harmonious patterns; here we see instead how a happy native instinct made perfect and universal use of the ground from which it grew".[85]

Wickham's phrase "symphony" of stone was also used by J.B. Priestley to describe Upper and Lower Slaughter.[86] Priestley also maintained that these two villages "do not merely keep on existing but live like noble lines of verse", a comment that reverberated in Thomas Burke's remark that Cotswold buildings were "poems in stone", Massingham's "epics" of stone and Ivor Browns "lyrics writ in stone".[87] The motif here is as much *composition* as creation and cultivation.

Through such rhetoric the imaginative reworking of the themes of utility, responsiveness and craftsmanship persisted, especially in H.J. Massingham's *Wold Without End*, which preceded *Cotswold Country* by some five years. Throughout the

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[83]Timperley, H.W., 1931, *A Cotswold Book*, Jonathan Cape, p.21-22.
[84]Timperley, H.W., 1933, "Introduction", Carrington, N. (ed), *Broadway and the Cotswolds* printed and published for the Lygon Arms, Broadway by Kynoch Press, Witton, Birmingham, p.19.
[85]Wickham, A.K., 1932, *op cit.*, p.37-38.
[86]Priestley, J.B., 1984, *English Journey*, William Heinemann Ltd, London, first published 1934, p.40.

book Massingham was able to speak of the combination of "imperious loveliness of line, colour and slope with true utility", the "unity of man and nature that gave birth to the homes of the Cotswolds" and the traditional Cotswold style derived from "a local inspiration and working in lovely harmony with the nature of the primeval Cotswold stone".[88] "All beauty" he wrote, "is a matter of tight relationship in art, in nature and in human life, a kind of obedience to the nature of the materials"[89] - and in the Cotswolds, the material was everything. The stone was "the mighty mother of the total Cotswold heritage", it "inspired the men and fashioned the hills".[90] The Cotswold buildings were like "the matured thoughts of Cotswold stone" carrying "the epic of the limestone to a new measure".[91]

When J.B. Priestley visited the Cotswolds in the course of his *English Journey* he spoke of the "unusual and exquisite harmony of line and colour in architecture" which was not the product of one particular period but one definite tradition persisting over "hundreds of years". "There are still some old Cotswold masons who work in that tradition and could work in no other" he wrote, adding evocatively "In their hands the stone flowers naturally into those mullions. They can see the Cotswold houses already stirring in the very quarries".[92] In the hands of the mason in Massingham's mind's eye, however, a good deal more than a simple mullion was flowering:

> [The stone] was delicately amenable to the teeming suggestions of the stone-carver. Lightly he struck it with his wand and it flowered into glorious gardens of saints and angels and kings and prelates and lions and unicorns and dragons and slithy toves and camelopards and Anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders and Cousin Dick who had had one over the eight and Will who had the toothache.[93]

Massingham confusingly juxtaposes religious and secular imagery here, with the mason as conjuror summoning saint and angels from the rock. It is in *Cotswold Country*, from

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[87]*Ibid.*, p.40; Burke, T. 1933, *op cit.*, p.118; Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.222; Brown, I., 1935, *The Heart of England*, London, B.T. Batsford, p.27.
[88]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *Wold Without End*, Cobden Sanderson, p.84, 117, 222.
[89]*Ibid.*, p.183.
[90]*Ibid.*, p.157; Massingham, H.J., 1941, *Remembrance - An Autobiography*, B.T. Batsford, p.81.
[91]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.157, 170, 289.
[92]Priestley, J.B., 1984, *op cit.*, p.44.
[93]Massingham, H.J., 1937, *op cit.*, p.6.

which the last quote came, that the description of the garden of stone reached a crescendo in some of Massingham's most effusive, magniloquent passages. "In its relations with the landscape" he wrote, "the grey or yellow-grey village loses just enough of its salience in detail to be as it were manifested from the earth. The trees and bushes grow out of the limestone rock; the villages *appear* out of it".[94] Here Massingham deliberately shrouds the hum-drum building process in mystique, uncharacteristically blotting out the mason and the craftsman to emphasise the quintessential naturalness of the Cotswold village in the Cotswold scene. He went on

> Harmony is the essence of the limestone, in the nature of its stone, in the forms of its landscape, and in the relations between the two. The texture of the stone, its soft melting tomes and the continuity between period and period in the common acknowledgements of their architectural varieties to one dominant style, these elements are the true and appropriate ones for a landscape the disposition of whose surfaces are an expression of order and unity. Free as are the giant's limbs, massive as his frame, spacious his stride from county to county and noble the gesture with which he flings an arm about his valleys and villages, there is an inborn self-discipline about his every movement. Even his wildness is never a wilderness.[95]

As in other uses of garden imagery, the themes of order, harmony, unity and control are foremost and usually the result of a benevolent and reciprocal relationship between people and the land. The "shapes of power" - churches, manor houses, castles, cottages and barns - are "summoned from the limestone by the magician, man".[96] Furthermore,

> the collective, instinctive genius of the Cotswold mason sprang up like mustard seed from end to end of the Cotswolds... What was manifest in Saintbury was the Cotswold men's almost mystical sense of fitting their villages to the nature of the ground like notes to a score..."[97]

The garden of stone metaphor continued to be a popular tool for explanation and description but never reached the rhetorical heights to which Massingham had sent it. Nevertheless the imaginative intensity of houses growing from the soil persisted. John Moore was able to speak of walls and houses growing "beautifully from the earth", and

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[94]*Ibid.*, pp.3-7.
[95]*Ibid.*, p.17-18.
[96]*Ibid.*, p.20-21.

William Beach Thomas likened villages to lichen on rocks.[98] Robert Henriques, writing years after Massingham coined the phrase "garden of stone" wrote:

> It need only be said that when the houses cease to grow out of the hillsides, as if the limestone had accidentally erupted from beneath the turf into a village, a manor, a barn, a church, you are outside the Cotswold hills; and that when a village seems to be entirely accidental in its site and composition, and yet as inevitable as a group of elms, or as a beech copse hanging above a stream, you are inside the Cotswolds again.[99]

The Garden of Stone and the Organic Community

It should now be clear that the garden of stone describes an organic community in a reciprocal relationship with the soil and the stone. In this section I wish to explore the idea of the organic community a little further to show how it operated *within* representations of both the Cotswolds and English national identity. Williams has argued that there are five broadly twentieth century meanings of 'organic';

> to stress an idea of 'wholeness' in society; to stress the growth of a 'people', as in rising nationalisms; to stress 'natural growth', as in 'culture', with particularly reference to slow change and adaptation; to reject 'mechanist' and 'materialist' versions of society; to criticise industrialism, in favour of a society 'in close touch with natural processes (i.e. agriculture).[100]

The construction of a garden of stone speaks to all of these simultaneously. The first part of this section will examine the idea of the organic society in the Cotswolds and England, whilst the second part will look at how these constructions were mobilised to criticise industrialism and urban growth, reject mechanist and materialist versions of society and oppose the ill-defined yet disturbing phenomena of "Progress".

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[97]*Ibid.*, p.94.
[98]Moore, J., 1937, *op cit.*, p.10 and 16; Beach Thomas, W., 1938, *op cit.*, p.59.
[99]Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds*, Vision of England series edited by Williams Ellis, C. and Williams Ellis, A., Paul Elek, London, p.52.
[100]Williams, R., 1982, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, Hogarth Press, p.264.

The Organic Community

Where and what was the organic community? Like the garden of stone, the broader idea of the organic community is constructed through the language of slow growth, seasonal cycles, nature and cultivation (in the sense of nurturing plants rather than knowledge). It was not a coincidence that the phrase 'garden of stone' was coined by Massingham at almost the same time as historian G.M. Trevelyan described the English as "literally children of the earth", and William Beach Thomas argued that the meaning of life was in the country.[101] Algernon Gissing used the analogy of the orchard to describe the communities of the Cotswolds. Though planted by people, old orchards were "as natural a part of the landscape as the common or coppice" just as "those in daily contact with the soil, who draw their sustenance from it, blend with other natural objects that make up the landscape".[102] J.B. Priestley suggested that the cottage in John Constable's *Cottage in a Cornfield* looked as if it had "grown there" and all across England towns "fitted snugly into the landscape, as if they were no more than bits of woodland; and roads went winding the easiest way as naturally as rivers; and it was impossible to say where cultivation ended and wild life began".[103] Organic communities were essentially *natural* and *rural*, blending harmoniously with their environments as a result of slow change and adaptation.

The organic communities of rural England were to be found more specifically in the *villages* of rural England which stood as totems of stability and tabernacles of values.[104] The idea of a garden of stone would have been meaningless without the Cotswold village on which the metaphor turned Elsewhere, Massingham applauded the "revelation of a local, self-acting society, living by a fixed pattern of behaviour and with its roots warmly bedded in the soil" that he found described in Flora Thompson's

[101]Trevelyan, G.M., 1945, "Introduction", Lees-Milne, J. (ed), *The National Trust: A Record of Fifty Years' Achievement*, B.T. Batsford, p.xi; Beach Thomas, W., 1947, *op cit.*, p.178. The first edition, published by Michael Joseph in 1946, has also been used elsewhere in this thesis.
[102]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.177.
[103]Priestley, J.B., 1935, "Introduction", *The Beauty of Britain*, B.T. Batsford, p.8.
[104]Chase, M., 1989, "This is no claptrap: this is our heritage", Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Manchester University Press, p.132.

reminiscences of village life in *Lark Rise to Candleford*.[105] A.J. Wickham argued that the English village was

> the one feature of the English landscape which more than anything else distinguishes it from the civilised landscape of other countries. At their best they represent the union of nature and art in the elemental simplicity of each: art in the broad sense of the work of men - for artlessness is of the essence of their beauty - and nature in their setting and in the uses to which centuries of labourers, planters, and gardeners have bent her.[106]

Again, images of patient cultivation inform Wickham's restrained comments. Wickham refused to sentimentalise the village and strove for a popular introduction to English rural topography, but Thomas Burke was perhaps less wary of hyperbole. "There must, I suppose, come a time when there will be no villages in England" he mused,

> only garden cities, arterial roads, and standardised residential estates; and it seems hard to realise that it will still be England... so deeply is the village set in our national consciousness - in our painting, our literature, and our very conception of England - that wanting it England would be to us a mere skeleton... They were the genesis of England... They have grown from the soil and into the soil, so that they seem to have been a continuous and necessary a part of the scene as the trees and the sky.[107]

Once again growth imagery is used here to describe the village but also to describe a particular vision of England - one which becomes somehow less English for the loss of the organic village community, the roots of which can be traced back to the remote past.

The relation of the organic community to an idea of authentic Englishness support the argument I started to make in the last chapter about finding England everywhere. Organic village communities were not exclusively located in the south of England as Burke's and Wickham's books, among others, make plain. The organic metaphor was reemphasised in Fagg and Hutchings' *Introduction to Regional Surveying*

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[105]Massingham, H.J., 1984, "Introduction", Thompson, F., *Lark Rise to Candleford*, Penguin, first published 1939, p.9.
[106]Wickham, A.K., 1932, *op cit.*, p.2.
[107]Burke, T., 1933, *op cit.*, p.24.

in which they likened Civil Parishes to "the cells within a living organism, each complete in itself with its nucleus and yet in vital contact with the neighbouring cells".[108]

The idea that the organic community had endured for millennia is also reflected in descriptions of its "traditional life pattern" - a phrase used to describe village life by George Bourne (alias Sturt) in *Change in the Village* (1912). Life in Lower Bourne was the "essence of an old system" under which people "subsisted in the main upon what their own industry could provide out of the soil and materials of their own countryside".[109] Algernon Gissing believed that these were also the characteristics of Cotswold villages whose inhabitants were "strictly of the soil".[110] In *Culture and Environment* Leavis and Thompson maintained that "the more 'primitive' England represented an animal naturalness, but distinctively human [condition]" and used Sturt's account of village life in *Change in the Village* as their evidence of an ideal organic community. Sturt's villagers, they pointed out,

> expressed their human nature, they satisfied their human needs, in terms of the natural environment; the things they made - cottages, barns, ricks and waggons - together with their relations with one another constituted a human environment, and a subtlety of adjustment and adaptation, as right and inevitable... their ways of life reflected the rhythm of the seasons, and they were in close touch with the sources of their sustenance in the neighbouring soil.[111]

Cotswold cottages were among signs and expressions of an ordered and patterned "art of life" identified by Leavis and Thompson, which embraced social arts, codes of intercourse and responsive judgement to the natural environment and the rhythms of the year.[112] H.J. Massingham described the "hidden history" of the Cotswolds in precisely these terms, showing how he became conscious of a "pattern, a unity, a secret rhythm to which the people, the landscape, the husbandry, the architecture and the crafts all contributed upon the common ground of the native

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[108]Fagg, C.C. and Hutchings, G.E., 1930, *An Introduction to Regional Surveying*, Cambridge University Press, p.27; Matless, D., 1992, "Regional surveys and local knowledges: the geographical imagination in Britain, 1918-1939", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17, p.467.
[109]Bourne, G., 1920, *Change in the Village*, London, Duckworth, first published in 1912, p.117.
[110]Gissing, A., *op cit.*, p.55.
[111]Leavis, F.R. and Thompson, D., 1933, *Culture and Environment - The Training of Critical Awareness*, Chatto and Windus, p.91.
[112]*Ibid.*, p.1.

stone".[113] Embodied in the co-operative village system, these formed the "wider and deeper cause" of the garden of stone. For Sturt's village inhabitants this meant that they knew themselves to be part of something larger than the individual.[114]

Part of the power of the organic community resided in the suggestion that it was just on the verge of disappearing, generating nostalgia for an England of organic village communities that were free of exploitation, conflict, and instability. In evoking continuity with an unknowable distant past, the notion of an organic community described the England of the imagination as much as any relict physical place. As Leavis and Thompson commented "the Old England is the England of the organic community".[115] But it was precisely in the stability through longevity of this traditional society that Dean William Inge detected its vulnerability. "So far as our culture is traditional" he warned, "it is in danger from the vast aggregation of people who have no traditions, uprooted from the soil, and crowded together under conditions which create an angry and rebellious class-consciousness, without the 'organic filaments' which bind together all the members of a healthy society".[116] Inge seemed to imply that the organic community was inflexible and thereby unable to adapt to new conditions of life. But Massingham was of a different view, arguing that the ruin of "a closely knit organic society with a richly interwoven and traditional culture [has] defied every change, every aggression", but the changes that "established the modern world" were of such magnitude that they were irresistible.[117]

Massingham was convinced that the close relation of people to the earth expressed in the garden of stone metaphor and in evocations of an organic community had been reversed and violated by Industrialisation and Progress - which he usually privileged with capital letters. In *Cotswold Country* from 1937 he pointed out that "the Industrial Revolution opened the annals of that progress which had rendered all these nice discriminations between one stone and another, all these pretty relationships

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[113]Massingham, H.J., 1941, *op cit.*, p.73.
[114]Keith, W.J., 1975, *The Rural Tradition*, The Harvester Press Ltd., p.159.
[115]Leavis, F.R. and Thompson, D., 1962, *op cit.*, p.87.
[116]Inge, W.R., 1926, *The Modern World - A Survey of Historical Forces Volume VII England*, London, Ernest Benn Limited, p.86.
[117]Massingham, H.J., 1984, *op cit.*, p.10.

between soil and style, landscape and architecture, locality and craftsmanship, entirely meaningless".[118] Massingham believed that while he lived in the Cotswolds, through contact with yeomen, innkeepers, labourers, craftsmen and landworkers, through the homes built by their ancestors, through the churches and barns, through the landscape and rock, he had discovered the old England which progress had mislaid.

Leavis and Thompson maintained that the great agent of change and destruction of the organic community was the machine which had

> destroyed the old ways of life, the old forms, and by reason of the continual rapid change it involves, prevented the growth of the new. Moreover, the advantages it brings us in mass-production has turned out to involve standardisation and levelling down outside the realm of mere material goods... films, newspapers, publicity in all its forms, commercially catered fiction - all offers satisfaction at the lowest level, and inculcate the choosing of the most immediate pleasures, got with the least effort.[119]

Algernon Gissing's concerns were very similar to those of Leavis and Thompson. In *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire* from 1924 he argued that country life "should be restored to its place as the mainspring of national sentiment". "It is a fallacy to suppose" he went on

> that country life should be stimulated from the same sources as that of the town. The two temperaments are and ought to be essentially different... and if the rural mind is led to adopt the town attitude the deeper will be the national loss... I suppose we may welcome... progress if we like, but the culture imparted to this awakening by Sunday newspapers, the cheaper daily press, and the cinema, which are our main sources of education after fourteen, will scarcely help to confirm and widen the simple virtues which had confessedly built up our national character.[120]

The organic community and the garden of stone are clearly being mobilised here in an argument about the destruction of the English character - considered to have been nurtured within organic communities - by urban living and consequent exposure to mass cultural productions like cinema and cheap novels and by mass entertainment of the sort encountered in Blackpool by J.B. Priestley with its

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[118]Massingham, H.J., 1941, *op cit.*, p.5.
[119]Leavis, F.R. and Thompson, D., *op cit.*, p.3.

> miles and miles of promenades, its three piers, its gigantic dance-halls, its variety shows, its switch-backs and helter-skelters, its array of wine bars and oyster saloons and cheap restaurants and tea houses and shops piled high and glittering with trash.... its amusements are becoming too mechanised and Americanised... The entertainers are more calculating, their shows more standardised, and the audiences more passive. It has developed a pitiful sophistication - machine made and not really English - that is much worse than the old hearty vulgarity.[121]

The problem was compounded by the understanding that the cultural 'dilution' taking place in the towns was also occurring in the countryside, in precisely those organic communities which had previously nourished the national character. Stanley Baldwin was certainly unambiguous about where the best type of the race came from when he stated "England is the country and the country is England",[122] a position reinforced in the now well known passage evoking with patriotic ardour a typical English scene:

> The sounds of England, the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been seen in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished and every works in England has ceased to function, for centuries the one eternal sight of England. The wild anemones in the woods in April, the last load at night of hay being drawn down a lane as the twilight comes on, when you can scarcely distinguish the figures of the horses as they take it home to the farm, and above all, most subtle, most penetrating and most moving, the smell of wood smoke coming up in an autumn evening, or the smell of the scutch fires: that wood smoke that our ancestors, tens of thousands of years ago, must have caught on the air when they were coming home with the result of the day's forage, when they were still nomads, and when they were still roaming the forests and the plains of the continent of Europe. These things strike down into the very depths of our nature, and touch chords that go back to the beginning of time and the human race, but they are chords that with every year of our life sound a deeper note in our innermost being.[123]

In this speech the elements of rural life that characterise the garden of stone metaphor are clear: In this landscape of bucolic simplicity, eternal spring sunshine shines down on a landscape in which people and nature are in harmony with each other through the

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[120]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.12 &18-19.
[121]Priestley, J.B., 1934, *English Journey*, Heinemann, p.389-390.
[122]Baldwin, S., 1926, "England", *On England and Other Addresses*, Phillip Allan and Co. Ltd., p.6.
[123]*Ibid.*, p.7.

practice of traditional agriculture, husbandry and crafts. Here exactly are elements of the organic identified by Williams - the wholeness of society and its naturalness. Furthermore Baldwin is not describing anywhere in particular in this evocation of the middle landscape and the ideal condition of rural England. But Baldwin could not have made this speech unless he felt the very England he was describing was under threat.

Baldwin's speech both proposes an ideal and by doing so implicitly criticises industrialism and rejects mechanist and materialist versions of society. At the end of this lyrical passage Baldwin reflects that it contains "the things that make England, and I grieve for it that they are not the childish inheritance of the majority of the people today in our country".[124] The place of the garden in the England of organic communities is clear as he adds "nothing can be more touching than to see how the working man and woman after generations in the towns will have their tiny bit of garden if they can, will go to gardens if they can, to look at something they have never seen as children but which their ancestors knew and loved".[125]

Leavis and Thompson's solution to the dysfunctional urban lifestyle was an education that would control the disintegrating and cheapening forces through 'defensive' training and by a "positive training in experience that literature is qualified to offer".[126] Massingham, on the other hand, argued powerfully for the recreation of a rural peasantry under a squirarchy.

In a 1942 article in *Gloucestershire Countryside* entitled "Village Bedrock" and again in his book *English Countryman* Massingham identified five types of village inhabitant, the peasant, the yeoman, the craftsman, the squire and the priest or parson each one of which was, in his view, suffering from functional disturbance as a result of the march of progress and modernity.[127] The five types had, in his view, ceased to become *adscriptus glebæ*, a term applied to the villein or bondsman to signify that he

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[124]*Ibid.*, p.7.
[125]*Ibid.*, p.8.
[126]Williams, R., 1982, *op cit.*, p.261.
[127]Massingham, H.J., 1942, "Village Bedrock", *Gloucestershire Countryside*, Volume 4, no.7, April-June 1942, p.152-153; Massingham, H.J., 1942, *English Countryman*, Batsford.

was bound to the soil. "The process called 'Progress' has detached every one of these type-figures from the village" he grumbled

> ...The term *adscriptus glebæ* has practical and spiritual implications both: its meanings are aesthetic as well as functional. As I found when I was working out their histories, you can't separate the practical, aesthetic and spiritual elements from any of the five, even if you try. So remarkably true is it that good husbandry may be historically called the root of good literature, true piety and the art and craft of living. The history of these five figures shows that we are dealing not merely with a set of agricultural problems but the foundations of the English tradition. The peasant, the yeoman, the craftsman, the squire and the parson are what you might call basic England.[128]

In this passage the religious, secular and aesthetic significances of the garden of stone are combined. The only way to regenerate rural England in the face of the "house-breaking with violence" wreaked by progress was a restoration of the five types and the God-Man-Earth or folk-food-faith trio to which they belonged.[129] Like Geddes' Place-Work-Folk trilogy, Massingham's food-folk-faith nexus described a "dialectical rather than a determinist view of the relation between people and environment".[130] It is somewhat ironic that the food-folk-faith trilogy that described for Massingham a fundamentally English condition, may have its provenance in the French intellectual heritage of Le Play's *Lieu-Travail-Famille*.[131]

Although Leavis and Thompson were clearly advocates of the organic society, their educational solutions opposed Massingham's ideas of "restoration without revolution". Rather, they warned against simple solutions and ruefully admitted that

> there can be no mere going back. It is useless to think of... scrapping the machine in the hope of restoring the old order. Even if agriculture was revived, that would not bring back the organic community. It is important to insist on what has been lost lest it should be forgotten; for the memory of the old order must be the chief incitement towards the new. If we forget the old order we shall not know what kind of thing to strive towards, and in the end there will be no striving, but a surrender to the 'progress' of the machine.[132]

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[128]Massingham, H.J., 1942, *op cit.*, p.153.
[129]*Ibid.*, p.153.
[130]Matless, D., 1992, *op cit.*, p.467.
[131]*Ibid.*, p.467.
[132]Leavis, F.R. and Thompson, D., 1933, *op cit.*, p.96-97.

Although Massingham continued to argue that the "live roots" of England "remain in the soil, if their flowering has been frosted in the autumn of our industrial revolution" other observers like J.B. Priestley called for a rational economic system that would prevent England from becoming the slave of the machine.[133]

Although the organic community was being mobilised to make exclusive claims for England and Englishness, they were also at work in H.J. Fleure's writing on Welsh national identity. Fleure was sympathetic to Geddes' Place-Work-Folk Trilogy that resonated in Massingham's thinking.[134] Gruffudd argues that Welshness was constructed as "an organic unity between humans and environment".[135] George Stapledon, an agricultural scientist writing in the first half of the twentieth century, proposed that the countryside of *Britain* "carries in its population the genes, unsullied and uncontaminated, that maintain and perpetuate our own national vigour and national characteristics".[136] Iorwerth Peate, meanwhile, was making almost precisely the same claims for preserving rural agriculture, industry and the crafts as the spiritual basis of Welsh rural life as Massingham in England. Several years before Massingham wrote *Cotswold Country* or "Village Bedrock", Peate was arguing for the self sufficient village community

> where work and leisure, individual enterprise and co-operation were combined to produce a rural polity which seems to be far nearer perfection than the unhealthy striving of those communities where poverty is extreme and wealth out of all proportion to the needs of those who enjoy it.[137]

Peate's village community was an "organic, self sufficient and co-operative system which encouraged courtesy, artistry and kindness". And at precisely the moment when Algernon Gissing was writing about the necessary differences between English town and country life, Peate wrote:

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[133]Massingham, H.J., 1934, "Introduction", *English Country - Fifteen Essays by Various Authors*, Wishart and Co., Adelphi, p.xvii; Priestley, J.B., 1984, *op cit.*, p.52.
[134]Gruffudd, P., 1994, *op cit.*, p.63.
[135]*Ibid.*, p.63
[136]Stapledon, G., 1944, *The land now and tomorrow*, Faber and Faber, first published in 1935, p.231; Gruffudd, P., 1994, *op cit.*, p.65.
[137]Peate, I., 1928, "The social organisation of Welsh rural industries", *Welsh housing and development yearbook 1928*, WHDA, Cardiff, p.104; Gruffudd, P., 1994, *op cit.*, p.69.

> The shoddy furniture of the cities, and the short lived manufactures of the mass production firms have found their way into the countryside, and the result is not only a deterioration of the common necessities of life but a disintegration of rural society.[138]

Here Welsh and English national identity become zones of convergence for the linked discourses of ruralism, eugenics and regionalism. It becomes apparent that the claims made for Englishness and England are generated by and reinforce currents of thinking flowing between and beyond national identity.

"Nothing Remains of England Where the Country Used To Be...."

I suggested earlier in this chapter that the garden of stone metaphor has provenance in garden/city or country/city oppositions of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I would now like to set the garden of stone in the context of the perceived demolition of rural England, expanding some themes mentioned in the last section. I have taken the title of this section from a poem by Peggy Pollard[139] (reproduced shortly) because I wish to suggest that the construction of rural England, of which the garden of stone metaphor was a part, was a victim of its own success, engendering the very features that it was mobilised in opposition to; suburbs and 'bungaloid growth'.

In addition to the peril of mass cultural productions and entertainment eroding the minds of town and country dwellers alike, there were other, more tangible threats to the English countryside that could be identified. There was, for instance, the threat of the urban masses visiting and despoiling the countryside - something that will be considered in chapter seven. This section is, however, concerned with another threat - uncontrolled suburban sprawl and the introduction of inappropriate building styles and jerry building which posed a considerable menace to the "unspoilt" villages of England

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[138]Peate, I., 1928, *op cit.*, p.103; Gruffudd, P., 1994, *op cit.*, p.69.

[139]Clough Williams Ellis notes that Peggy Pollard was "once the leader of a notorious, yet beneficent secret society called 'Ferguson's Gang' that raised money by highly unconventional means for good Conservation causes". Clough Ellis, W., 1975, "1975 Preface", *England and the Octopus*, Portmerion, p.3. First published 1928.

and its rural landscapes. It is worth returning to Pollard's poem to illustrate the perceived danger and its source:

The Jerry Builder[140]

The jerry builder lay dreaming
In his golden four poster bed;
He dreamt of an endless ribbon
Of bungalows pink and red,
With fancy work on the gables
To every purchaser's choice:
And he dreamt in the back of his conscience
He heard Old England's voice:

Don't build on the By-pass, Brother:
Give ear to our last appeal!
Don't advertise where it tries the eyes
And distracts the man at the wheel.
You've peppered the landscape brother
And blotted out half the sky:
Get further back with your loathsome shack,
Let the By-pass pass you by!

The jerry builder made answer:
"I'm English. I wants me rights.
Wot are the By-pass fields to me
But desirable building sites?
I've peppered the landscape proper,
But me pocket 'as to be filled.
If I wants to build on the By Pass,
I'm bloody well going to build!"

Don't build on the By-pass brother:
It won't suit anyone's book;
An endless street is nobody's treat,
With roofs wherever you look.
Before you smother the country
We only hope you'll die:
You ought to be hung with the ribbons you've strung...
Let the By-Pass pass you by!

They swung out a big new By-pass
When the first was a choke full street:
The glorious day isn't far away
When London and Liverpool meet,

[140]*Ibid.*, p.4-5. Williams Ellis does not date or reference the poem but indicates that Pollard wrote it at the time when Williams Ellis was "fighting the menace of galloping ribbon building".

And nothing remains of England
Where the country used to be
But roads run straight through a housing estate
And a single specimen tree.

Don't build on the By-pass Brother;
Allow us a breath of air:
We like to see an occasional tree,
More so as they're getting so rare;
You're poisoning all the country
Like a dirty bluebottle fly:
Don't clutter the tracks with your loathsome shacks
Let the By-Pass pass you by!

The elements that Williams-Ellis, Pollard and others objected to were clear. Ill designed ribbon developments built in a mass-produced pink or red brick were eating away at the countryside and, thereby, England. Liverpool and London (could any other large urban areas have been substituted here?) are signally un-English. Massingham observed these problems in the Cotswolds. Looking down on Bourton-on-the-Water he saw dramatised "the clash between the harmonies of the traditional Cotswold houses rising flowerlike from their Cotswold earth and the abrupt dissonance - cacophony indeed - of those warts of the speculative builder which, I suppose, the railway has brought to Bourton".[141] Massingham illustrates here the disruption of growth in the garden of stone by imported and inappropriate buildings which Pollard's poem identified as also a national problem.

Clough Williams Ellis contributed a chapter on Cotswold architecture to Ward Lock's guide to the area and took the opportunity to bemoan the uncontrolled spread of bungalows and suburbs. Turning again to poetry to make his point, he reproduced E.M. Forster's "jingle" which "gives us a true and tragic glimpse of our crazy destructiveness of old and irreplaceable rural loveliness":[142]

Mr. Bumble (the Local Authority)
Strictly Legal, strictly legal
To break up the big estates
Ripe, ripe for development
And very good the rates!

[141]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.248.
[142]Williams Ellis, C., c.1946, "Cotswold Architecture", *The Cotswolds*, Ward, Lock and Co. Ltd., p.21.

Jerry (The speculative builder)

So cut the trees down and clear the site
Bungle the bungalows left and right
Pile the pylons as high as you can
I'm a practical business man!
It doesn't matter where they stand

All

Ripe, ripe for development
Is England's green and pleasant land![143]

As in Pollard's poem the single minded ambition of the jerry builder is highlighted as is the unthinking destruction of the countryside. Williams Ellis used the poem to demonstrate his fear that the Cotswolds were being affected by this "blight". He was in terror of "the suburban minded jerry-builder" despoiling the area, averring that

> the thoughtless and utterly unnecessary disfigurement of this quietly lovely piece of England by discordant red brick erections ought to be as unthinkable an outrage as the slashing of a picture in the National Gallery. Too much of England has already been selfishly slashed to tatters to our everlasting loss, but in the Cotswold Hills we still hold - almost miraculously - a treasure that should be regarded as a national trust...[144]

As early as 1900 Guy Dawber commented in his article "Cotswold Country" that "Much of our old Architecture in towns and villages, is gradually disappearing before the relentless hand of modern improvements and in its place buildings are being substituted, many of which are completely out of harmony with their surroundings".[145] In a determined attempt to ignore the perceived threat to English village life P.H. Ditchfield resolutely stated that "One of the causes of the charm of an English village arises from the sense of their stability. Nothing changes in our country life".[146] But it was evident that changes taking place at the national level were being played out in the Cotswolds with the result that the area became a site over which issues were contested through the mediums of non-fictional rural writing, journal and magazine articles and guide books.

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[143]*Ibid.*, p.21.
[144]*Ibid.*, p.21.
[145]Dawber, G., 1900, "The Cotswold Country", *The Journal of the Society of Architects*, Volume 7, number 7, May 1900, pp.159-169.
[146]Ditchfield, P.H., 1908, *op cit.*, p.2.

Enjoying his *English Holiday with Car and Camera*, James John Hissey suspended his enjoyment of the Cotswolds to deliver a diatribe on Welsh slate. "Nothing could be cheaper, nothing uglier, nothing could be more out of harmony with the mellow look of the fair English landscape than the chilly blue of Welsh slate, unless it be that abomination of unsightliness - corrugated iron" he thundered, though there is no evidence that he actually came across any in the Cotswolds.[147] On the contrary, he was driven to his tirade, it seems, by the sheer beauty of the roofs of Chipping Campden. Alison Murray, on the other hand, was dismayed that Bourton on the Water had admitted some intrusive red brick and blue slate, a disease carried in from the Midlands and Wales by the railways.[148]

Harold Trew, writing for the magazine *Gloucestershire Countryside* put Hissey's and Murray's concerns in a broader national context when he lamented that

> The coming of the railway and the recent developments in motor-transport which have made the countryside accessible to all, have been also, unfortunately, the chief causes of its disfigurement, not only by the construction of railways, the destruction of trees and hedges in the widening of roads, the building of garages and the putting up of petrol pumps, but also, and perhaps chiefly, because materials from all parts of the country became available in districts to which they were formerly alien, so that the traditional styles of building, which arose through the enforced use of local materials, were no longer followed.[149]

Of course, the instinctive use of indigenous materials was one of the chief qualities of the garden of stone - and also village England. It was the physical manifestation of the dialectical relationship between people and their natural environment. In his introduction to *The English Countryside*, Massingham projected his ideas about instinct and stonework into an explanation for "the unique quality observable in the English landscape - its multiformity within the palm of the hand".[150]

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[147]Hissey, J.J., 1908, *op cit.*, p.241.
[148]Murray, A., 1930, *op cit.*, p.66.
[149]Trew, H., 1931, "House-Building in Gloucestershire", *Gloucestershire Countryside*, Volume 1,. Number 1, October 1931, p.12.
[150]Massingham, H.J., 1939, "Introduction", *The English Countryside*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, p.2.

> In remoulding England... the countryman was granted a wide continent of varieties within the spatial limits of a single country - infinite riches in a little room - and the fruit and virtue of his achievement were simply this, that, with the true humility of the artist who subdues his hand to what he works in, he was faithful to those variations ordained in the primeval rock. He became his theme; he got rid of the encumbrances that were in the way of its due and right expression. He remade England by fitting himself into its manifold parts, so that in the long run it can hardly be decided whether he made the country or the country made him.[151]

The veneration of vernacular architecture in the Cotswolds that was evident in the construction of the garden of stone can be seen as part of a complex response to the spread of suburban housing and new building - perhaps just the odd bungalow - in countryside and villages. Standing on his lawn in the Cotswolds W.H. Davies was both deeply saddened and enraged to find that in the centre of the hill opposite him

> in the most prominent position, there stand two small, new brick cottages, as shapeless as common sheds, and of a startling colour red... However, although those two cottages are such a blemish on the landscape, it cannot be as bad as this side of the valley, where there has been a growth of bungalows.[152]

Clearly this was meant to stand in stark contrast to his description only a few lines before of the individual character of the Cotswold cottage with its old grey stone and rough tiles. Ancient is juxtaposed to new; natural and harmonious to unnatural and brash; the ripe mellow colour of the indigenous stone - hewn by the hands of a Cotswold mason - to the jarring red bricks churned out by a factory in the Midlands. What goes unexamined by Davies in his diatribe is the impulse that brought not only the builders of the unsightly cottage to the Cotswold hillside but caused ribbon development and jerry building in the countryside. These sorts of buildings were symptomatic of suburban development which was itself a material consequence of popularised rural imagery.

The Suburban Paradox

Bunce has argued that

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[151]*Ibid.*, p.2.

[152]Davies, W.H., 1934, "A Cotswold Village", Massingham, H.J.(ed), *English Country*, Wishart and Co., Adelphi, p.99-100.

> throughout history suburbs have evinced ambivalent and often strongly contrasting reactions... As suburbanisation has become the principle mechanism for urban expansion and the housing of middle-class masses in the twentieth century, there has been a recurrent intellectual criticism of and urbane distaste for suburbia's sprawling spatial form, social [and physical?] uniformity and placeless landscape.[153]

Bunce hints at a considerable suburban paradox that formed a central issue in J.M. Richards' book *Castles on the Ground* published in 1946. "On the one hand" Richards wrote, "we have the alleged deficiencies of suburban taste; on the other we have the appeal it holds for ninety out of a hundred Englishmen, an appeal which cannot be explained away as some strange instance of mass aberration".[154]

Richards recognised the appeal of the version of English architectural history which spoke to a golden age of architecture harmoniously attuned to the needs and aspirations of the community it served. He further accepted that this had been disrupted by an age of eclecticism. But he strongly contested the view that suburban growth had distanced English architecture yet further from its golden age. Rather he argued that the "suburban style" represented a "true contemporary vernacular" defined by its ability to "unselfconsciously adapt itself to people's needs and aspirations".[155] The suburban idiom, he pointed out, had the one true quality of all vernaculars; "that of being rooted in people's instincts". Without a hint of irony he wrote

> So there it is, our own contemporary vernacular, spread thinly but ubiquitously over English hill and dale - or what was hill and dale before the speculative builder or the municipal councillor so aptly interpreted the people's instincts and carpeted them with this intricate jungle of red-peaked gables and evergreen hedges, mutli-coloured chimneys and winding, tree-shaded avenues. From Beacontree to Wythenshawe, from Port Sunlight to Angmering-on-Sea, the startling consistency of suburban character - despite its notorious vagaries in detail - indicates its origin in the living present. It could be the product of no other age than ours.[156]

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[153]Bunce, M., 1994, *The Countryside Ideal - Anglo American Images of Landscape*, Routledge, p.153.
[154]Richards, J.M., 1973, *Castles on the Ground - The Anatomy of Suburbia*, John Murray, first published in 1946 by the Architectural Press.
[155]*Ibid.*, p.18.
[156]*Ibid.*, p.19.

No evidence here of the scorn heaped on the jerry builder and councillor by E.M. Forster but plenty of evidence of what the suburban dweller might have been out to achieve.

The suburb, bungalows, "the makeshift world of shacks and shanties" on the plotlands of Englands coasts, "sylvan retreats, romantic river valleys, gentle hills and vantage points"[157] were a solution, sought by hundreds of thousands, to the problem of being *adscriptus glebæ*, not because of some instinctive yearning to return to the countryside but precisely because of the sheer volume of persuasive and passionate literature that venerated English rural life and landscape. The vitriol heaped upon suburban building, ribbon development and alien building materials failed to have the same impact as images of the benefits to mind and body of country living. C.E.M. Joad's warning that "you cannot... acquire the life of the country by simply dumping yourself on the countryside" fell on deaf ears.[158]

J.B. Priestley summed up the incongruity of the situation in his introduction to *The Beauty of Britain*, suggesting that there was a great deal to be said for the suburbs:

> To people of moderate means, compelled to live fairly near their work in city, the suburb offers the most civilised way of life. Nearly all Englishmen are at heart country gentlemen. The suburban villa enables the salesman or the clerk, out of hours, to be almost a country gentleman. (Let us admit that it offers his wife and children more solid advantages). A man in a newish suburb feels he has one foot in the city and one in the country.[159]

Leaving aside the gendered nature of Priestley's account, let me look at the other side of his argument. His criticisms of the suburbs were that they ate into the countryside and thereby enlarge the boundaries of the cities. Furthermore there was nothing "very pleasing in the sight of these villas and bungalows, thickly sown for miles, higgledy piggledy and messy".[160] It was not the *principle* of suburban living that Priestley objected to, but the form it had taken. In particular, the benefits that the individual

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157Hardy, D. and Ward, C., 1984, *Arcadia for All - the Legacy of a Makeshift Landscape*, Mansell, p.1.
158Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *The Book of Joad - A Belligerent Autobiography*, Faber and Faber, London, p.201.
159Priestley, J.B., 1935, *op cit.*, p.7.
160*Ibid.*, p.7.

reaped from being part of England's rural village communities were not easy to realise in suburbia.

Dr. Stephen Taylor, Senior Resident Medical Officer at the Royal Free Hospital, contributed an article to the *Lancet* in 1938 about suburban neurosis - a condition which particularly affected women (contrasting with Priestley's argument about the solid advantages of suburbia for women and children).[161] He argued that "existence in the suburbs is such that the self-preserving, race-preserving and herd instincts can be neither adequately satisfied nor sublimated". The suburban neurosis - the symptoms of which were a range of physiological and psychosomatic problems - was caused by boredom (lack of friends, not enough to do, not enough to think about) and anxiety about money, the house and children. In short, the suburban woman lacked precisely that sense of 'place in a community' that was seen to characterise the healthy life-style and mind-set of village dwellers. She was a resident of a "slum of the mind". "As long as life offers the suburban woman so little to live for so long will she continue to ... add to the numbers in our patient waiting halls" Taylor commented.[162] His cure was to develop the "corporate life" of suburbs through clubs and organised activities. He even suggested that new communities would only develop a true corporate sense with some revival of individual local leadership based on the model of old village squirearchies.[163]

As well as providing a new vernacular, the suburb (along with the converted railway carriage on the cliffs and the red brick cottage in the Cotswolds) represented a search for residential separation from the industrial cities, redefining the urban residential landscape through the images and symbols of nature and rurality.[164] The suburbs in particular demonstrated a symbolic confusion of city and country and reveal the depth and persistence of countryside myths in urban society.[165] In these commercial developments "the Arcadian escapism of the... suburban ideal has been most self-

[161]Taylor, S., 1938, "The Suburban Neurosis", *The Lancet*, 26 March.
[162]*Ibid.*, pp.759-761.
[163]*Ibid.*
[164]Bunce, M., 1994, *op cit.*
[165]*Ibid.*

consciously expressed".[166] The suburb and the rash of bungalows in W.H. Davies' village was the middle landscape realised, however unsatisfactorily in the long run.

It is perhaps ironic that the garden imagery that made the garden of stone so powerful and appealing a metaphor for the organic communities of the Cotswolds also inspired the desire to move into the suburbs that were seen to threaten rural landscapes. Indeed, speculative builders were able to make good use of garden imagery to sell plots and properties. Clough Williams Ellis laid this charge before his generic Mr. Otherman:

> You did not scruple to tempt two or three qualified but struggling doctors to write extravagant eulogies of your subsoil, of your water (of which there was very little), and of your air, which was of ordinary quality. There was a great deal about ozone and the dancing waves sparkling in the limpid sunlight, which was partly and sometimes true: nothing about drainage - which was wise, as there wasn't any - little about roads, for a similar reason, little specific indeed about any public services or obligations, but a great deal of heady innuendo that the Garden of Eden was at hand.[167]

Waters has argued that the centrality of the garden in suburban life cannot be contested. It is the

> topographical image in which the concept of the suburb is perhaps most frequently embodied; physically, as an essential component of the individual suburban residence and of the ambience of the suburb in general; and ideologically, as the spatial expression or synecdoche of a culture of seclusion and privatism centred on the nuclear family... It was the desire to possess a house with a garden in an area of peaceful seclusion and floral beauty that prompted many middle-class Victorians to gravitate towards the suburbs.[168]

In the suburban garden the paradoxes of suburban life are made manifest. Yeatman and Dowling identify "a garden's hugely inclusive realm. In it are concentrated, as perhaps nowhere else in human technology and art, a whole cluster of ideas and aspirations, some conscious and declared, others no less apparent for being

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[166]*Ibid.*, p.168-168.
[167]Clough Ellis, W., 1975, "1975 Preface", *England and the Octopus*, Portmerion, p.64-65. First published 1928.
[168]Waters, M., 1988, *op cit.*, p.210-211.

unconscious".[169] The middle landscape inspires and is (re)created in the suburban space.

Conclusion

"The Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye".[170]

In the garden of stone an accumulation of linked ideas and images is at work and the construction of this leitmotif for the Cotswolds is informed by and itself informs themes in the construction of national identity - a statement that makes the relations between the two sound deceptively simple instead of a bundle of intricate knot work. I have presented only one particular configuration of themes in this chapter and am conscious that a different tug on those knots might have made things unravel in a completely different way. These concluding remarks are not, then, meant to propose new configurations but reaffirm some important ones made in this chapter.

When the garden of stone is conjoined to the garden of Eden, the Cotswolds are (re)created as a physical and spiritual paradise working on the senses and offering enlightenment. In addition a statement is made about the impeccable moral standing of the organic communities of the Cotswolds which resonates through discussions of the ideal condition of England. Meanwhile the specific and less specific biblical analogies combine with entirely secular uses of garden imagery to propose an ideal or alternative existence in a place set apart from the everyday world (a theme which will be brought into sharper focus in the next chapter). Simultaneously the garden of stone is that zone of modulated and intensified sensual experience and a vehicle for expressing symbolic, political and religious ideas that I mentioned in the introduction. Paradise is, in this sense, a condition as well as a physical space, a place where people are as yet unfallen.[171]

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[169] *Ibid.*, p.30.

[170] Kipling, R., in Morton, H.V., 1927, *In Search of England*, Methuen and Co. Ltd., p.1.

[171] Withers, C.W.J.W., 1996, "Situating paradise: enlightenment debates on language, natural history and geography", a paper given at the Geography and Enlightenment Conference, Edinburgh University, 3rd - 6th July 1996.

Randolph and Hester have argued that the garden is both nostalgic and reactionary but just as strongly there is the hope that the world will be made better by it, an "unselfconscious but radically utopian belief".[172] Both these positions are expressed in the garden of stone. It is a significant symbol and metaphor for what was lost and what might yet be attained.[173] In some of its manifestations it played an essential part in maintaining and celebrating cultural diversity in a landscape increasingly made uniform in a number of ways. It is nostalgic, reactionary, looking back and anti-progress. But it also represents an ideal present and future world. What it is, England would ideally be. This chapter has shown that there were very different ways of attaining that ideal, demonstrating "the power of the garden to express, clarify, and reconcile oppositions and transform them into aspirations".[174] Thus the middle landscape is not only topographical (as the last chapter showed), but describes an ideal condition of society, mobilised to make political, social and economic statements and arguments about the condition of England.

[172]Francis, M. and Hester, R.T. Jnr (eds), 1991, *op cit.*, p.10.
[173]Marcus, C.C., 1991, *op cit.*, p.32.
[174]Francis, M. and Hester, R.T. Jnr (eds), 1991, *op cit.*, p.10.

Chapter Six

The Door is Ajar to the Past

> National identities are co-ordinated, often largely defined, by legends and landscapes, by stories of golden ages, enduring traditions, heroic deeds and dramatic destinies located in ancient or promised home-lands...[1]

In the last chapter I argued that part of the power of the organic community resided in the suggestions that first, it was seen to be the product of centuries of unbroken tradition and second, it was just on the verge of disappearing. In this chapter I wish to further explore how ideas of the past, tradition, history, longevity and (dis)continuity were woven into representations of the Cotswolds as incontiguous, set apart and remote in time from the rest of England whilst simultaneously representing the best of England. The first section examines how the Cotswolds were 'located' in specific pasts. It begins with a look at the aims of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society to introduce the issues of importance which inform this section. The second section introduces the 'door ajar' theme. The third section looks at how these themes were also at work in the construction of England and Englishness and shows how the idea of layers of time were used to imagine England's past, picking up the geological motif of chapter four.

Looking Back

In proposing the formation of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in 1874 T. Ducie, John Deddoe and P. Hallett were clearly persuaded of Gloucestershire's abundant history, noting that the county wanted in "neither Archaeologists nor in the materials of Archaeology".[2] Their hope in establishing the BGAS was to collect and classify antiquities and

> to know them in themselves and in their historical connections - through them to rise to some higher conception of the course and purpose of that past

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[1]Daniels, S., 1993, *Fields of Vision - Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Polity, p.5.

[2]Ducie, T., Deddoe, J. and Hallett, P., 1874, "Proposed - Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeology Society", *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, Volume 1, part 1, p.3.

> County Life, of which they are the monuments - by means of them, it may be, to shed light on the ideas and circumstances of the present: and by their preservation, where possible, to pass on a great an ancient inheritance unimpaired to the future: in short to take our rank among our sister counties in that work of local historical exploration and care in which the spirit of the time is now so clearly and happily manifesting itself.[3]

In "taking its rank among our sister counties" in the work of exploration the BGAS was involved in writing part of the national past at the sites of local and national historical importance in Gloucestershire.

The BGAS agenda was predicated on the notion that the quality of the pasts visible in Gloucestershire defined the region's scholastic interest but also its place in the story of the nation. Further, the BGAS were not concerned with the recent past; the list of Gloucestershire's historical 'credentials' starts with caves of pre-Aryan habitation, through pre-Roman and Roman times, Civil War Battlefields and ends with the Merchant Venturers who "pioneered English enterprise".[4] Their purpose was to situate the story of the region and the nation firmly in the past. This is also a characteristic of the (un)self-conscious efforts of the authors of assorted non-fictional rural writing, guide books and articles about the Cotswolds. Furthermore, implicit in the BGAS's hope that studying antiquities would "shed light on the ideas and circumstances of the present" is the idea of a *didactic past*; by their explorative and interpretive work the BGAS would know the past and therefore themselves. As this section and chapter will show, the idea of a didactic past was one that was also at work beyond the pages of the BGAS *Transactions*.

Naturally enough for a learned society of historians and antiquaries, the BGAS were interested in the relics of all the pasts that they felt made Gloucestershire "a rich epitome as it were of antiquities in general".[5] Others like J. Arthur Gibbs chose to 'locate' the Cotswolds in specific pasts. I will first examine those who situated the Cotswolds in the Middle Ages, then look at those who situated the area within broadly Elizabethan and Tudor times.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p.4.
[4] *Ibid.*, p.4.
[5] *Ibid.*, p.4.

The Middle Ages

Writing in 1909 Spencer Edge recalled the sense of revelation that accompanied his trip through the Cotswolds. "As the first village came into view" he wrote,

> I was amazed at its beauty. Each house, prefect to the chimney-stack, struck me as something unique; and it was not until I had ridden slowly through several villages, each as perfect as the last, that the truth dawned on me - here was mediaeval England, in all save its inhabitants![6]

The beauty of Broadway which "breathed the very essence of England in the Middle Ages" confounded Edge's attempts to sketch the town and left him musing on why "in this remote district, mediaeval England had been handed down to us more perfect and unspoiled than any other?"[7] The answer, he reasoned, lay in the hardy quality of the Cotswold stone which had preserved local buildings from "the havoc of the centuries". As he considered this he was thrown into a reverie about Broadway, England and the past.

> [Broadway] appeals to us strenuous folk of the twentieth century, not by reason of what it has done, but rather because of what it has been, and still is; an idyll, a pastoral symphony in which breathes the very spirit of poetry and sweet music. Here, as one sits by the lattice window looking out on the village street, on the children at play, and the labourer bent by toil, on the farmer's wagons, and the flock of sheep faithfully guarded by the watchful sheep-dog and most of all on the venerable monuments of a by-gone age that raise their gables to the summer sky, the greatness of the past is brought home to one; and as the present takes its place in the perspective of the centuries, one realises to the full, the why and wherefore of that innate love of the Homeland, that emotion which nothing can supplant or even challenge.[8]

What is important in this passage is the way in which a revelation of the past is linked to powerful patriotic feelings. Some of the most famous lines of Stanley Baldwin's speech "England" bear striking resemblance both to Edge's imagery and sentiments. Where Edge sees a toiling labourer, a farmer's wagon and the watchful sheepdog, Baldwin imagined the sounds of England and the sight of a plough team

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[6]Edge, S., 1909, "The Cotswolds", *English Illustrated Magazine*, November 1909, p.160.
[7]*Ibid.*, p.160.
[8]*Ibid.*, p.160-161. A contrasting account of Broadway's charms appears in chapter 7.

coming over the hill or the last load of hay being drawn down the lane at twilight.[9] For Edge, "the greatness of the past was brought home" by these things. To Baldwin they represented "the sight which has been seen in England since England was a land".[10] There is a deliberate intention on the part of both authors to demonstrate one of the didactic results of contemplating the past; a surge of patriotic feeling. As Hugh Cunningham has noted, the very essence of Baldwin's patriotism was that is should seem to be "simultaneously rooted in history and timeless".[11] The themes of patriotism, the past and its tutelary spirit are important themes running through other work which I will consider in this chapter.

In Edge's article the past is accessed through the built environment of the Cotswold village. Its apparent unchangedness, continuity of architecture and building materials stimulated Edge to look back to an unknowable distant past which he labels Mediaeval - though as he himself pointed out, much of the architecture he admired in Broadway was Tudor. Similarly, P.H. Ditchfield called Chipping Campden "one of the few perfect examples of the Middle Ages" but noted that one of its "gems" was the Market House, built in the reign of James I.[12] Louise Imogen Guiney saw "mediaeval games, in total disuse elsewhere, tags of immemorial rhyme, crop up gaily at their never-neglected seasons... to this day, in many of these long-memoried little places, they keep the pastoral veast [sic] a fortnight before the date set by Pope Gregory's Calendar".[13] In Richard Blake Brown's *Mr. Prune On Cotswold* Prune's first impression of Chipping Campden was of "recaptured Mediaevalism" and of going back three or four hundred years - from the 1930s to the Tudor period.[14]

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[9]Baldwin, S., 1927, "England", *On England*, Philip Allan and Co. Ltd. London.

[10]*Ibid.*, p.7.

[11]Cunningham, H., 1986, "The Conservative Party and patriotism", Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), *Englishness - Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm, p.292.

[12]Ditchfield, P.H., 1993, *Rural England, Cottage and Village Life*, Bracken Books, First Published in 1912, p.59.

[13]Guiney, L.I., 1913, "Some Account of Arcady", *Blackwood's Magazine*, No. MCLXXIV, August 1913, p.268. The Gregorian Calendar was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 and adopted in Great Britain in 1752. Hawkins, J.M. and Allen, R. (eds), 1991, *Oxford Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Oxford University Press.

[14]Blake Brown, R., 1938, *Mr. Prune on Cotswold*, London, Martin Secker, p.78.

Allison Murray described the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the golden age of the Cotswolds. She wrote of villages with "musical and romantic names" which "stir your imagination and inspire you with a feeling that you are in a mystic, elfish land where your quest for the old-world and the beautiful will surely be rewarded".[15] Interestingly, Murray speaks of the "atmosphere *you expect to find*"[16] (italics added) in the Cotswolds and there is a clear sense of a received image at work. Similarly, Clare Cameron found Painswick "on blue April morning, the pink apple blossom tossing across the old wall before the church spire, and the pointed roofs making a medieval picture".[17] Yet, as Murray noted in her own gazetteer, one of the oldest buildings in Painswick dated from late Tudor times.[18] Standing on nearby hills looking at Lower Slaughter F.G. Richens was struck by the "oddly medieval effect" of the grey houses, gleaming stream and trees.[19] Despite the apparent elasticity of the terms Middle Ages and Mediaeval they were used to describe a period in which the Cotswolds seemed to be situated and, by implication, the apotheosis of both Cotswold and national life with all the criticisms of the present that this implied. It would seem the *idea* that the atmosphere of the Cotswolds was Mediaeval was more powerful than any physical evidence that this was the case. Even more pervasive, however, was the practice of situating the Cotswolds in Elizabethan and Tudor times which the next section examines.

The Tudor Cotswolds

Travelling by train, J. Arthur Gibbs sped back in time from the bustle of *fin de siècle* London through "some of the finest bits of old England" on the Great Western Railway to the Cotswolds. "Though not a hundred miles from London, this part of Gloucestershire is one of the most primitive and old-fashioned districts in England" he

[15]Murray, A., 1930, *The Cotswolds*, Crypt House Pocket Series published by the British Publishing Co. Ltd, Crypt House Press, Gloucester and London. p.19.
[16]*Ibid.*, p.20.
[17]Cameron, C, 1930, *Green Fields of England - a Book of Footpath Travels*, Constable and Co. Ltd., p.70.
[18]Murray, A., 1930, *op cit.*, p.94.
[19]Richens, F.G., 1935, "The Unknown Cotswolds", *Great Western Railway Magazine*, Volume XLVII, Number 5, May 1935, p.268.

wrote.[20] Gibbs looked to an Elizabethan 'golden age' as the source of the architecture, festivals and pastimes he observed in the Cotswolds, arguing that it was evident that

> in everything they did our ancestors who lived in the Elizabethan age fully realised that they were working under the eye of a great taskmaster. His spirit was the making of the great men of the day, and in part laid the foundation for our national greatness.[21]

Gibbs' golden age, when England was 'real' was, in essence, the mid- to late-sixteenth century, in which the Cotswolds appeared to be delightfully trapped. "The whole country reminds one of the days of Merrie England" he wrote,

> so quaint and rural are the scenes... these country people, being simple in their tastes, have never endeavored to improve on the old style of building; the newer cottages resemble the old Elizabethan houses.[22]

Gibbs was similarly delighted with the pastimes he found on the Cotswolds, commenting that

> The old customs have not been allowed to pass away, and right merry is the Harvest Home. And Chrismastime is kept in real Old English Fashion, nor do the mummers forget to go their nightly rounds, with their strange tale of St. George and the Dragon.[23]

The very language that Gibbs employs is antique as he eulogises the past:

> Those were the grand old times when Berkshire, Gloucestershire and Somersetshire men amused themselves by cracking each other's heads and cudgel playing for a gold-laced hat and a pair of buckskin breeches; when a flitch of bacon was run for by donkeys; and when, last, but not least, John Morse, of Uffington, 'grinned agin another chap droo hos collars, a fine bit of spwoart, to be sure, and made the folks laaf'".[24]

Gibbs was by no means alone in suggesting that Elizabethan times were epitomised in the Cotswolds. Henry Branch was similarly persuaded, but felt that only

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[20]Gibbs, J.A., *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, p.116.
[21]*Ibid.*, p.42.
[22]*Ibid.*, p.122.
[23]*Ibid.*, p.27.

the traveler who was "possessed of the necessary culture and historical imagination" could successfully "borrow Hans Andersens's magic goloshes and [throw] himself back into the spacious times of great Elizabeth".[25] Again, the built environment was crucial to Branch's sense of the past.

> Manor-house after manor-house, mullioned and lichen-grown, will help the illusion, and serve to conjure up, for every season of the year, the sports, pastimes, and revels in which our ancestors were wont to indulge when England was indeed merrie. And no part of the land was merrier than this.[26]

Algernon Gissing recalled that, to a bookish and impressionable boy from the north his arrival in Saintbury on a lovely autumn morning in 1887 had been "nothing less than stepping into Elizabethan England... The local language, the whole life and landscape, the very atmosphere itself was in these days nothing but Shakespearean".[27] He maintained that Gloucestershire sustained what he called the Shakespearean spirit[28] and made no apology for his continual reference to the idea of Shakespeare's country.

> It may appear pedantic and tiresome to keep harping on that catchword 'Shakespeare's country', but if this could ever be made more than a hollow lip-word, could ever be *brought home to our nation as really significant of the* matchless spiritual ideal to which that inscrutable soul allures us, then the reiteration of his name and country could never be pressed too persistently on our ear.[29]

As with Gibbs, Elizabethan England represented an ideal condition for Gissing, the realisation of which could only improve present life.

Evoking the Tudor and Elizabethan eras as the best of times in the Cotswolds had its roots in a wider current of intellectual thought that informed the use of Elizabethan history in particular. At the very moment Gibbs and others discovered the

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[24]*Ibid.*, p.19-20.

[25]Branch, H., 1907, *Cotswold and Vale: or glimpses of past and present in Gloucestershire*, Cheltenham, Norman Sawyer and Co, St. George's Hall, p.2.

[26]*Ibid.*, p.2.

[27]Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London and Toronto, p.3.

[28]*Ibid.*, p.121.

[29]*Ibid.*, p.211.

Cotswolds marooned in Elizabethan England, the historian J.A. Froude was popularising the view of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as dominated by a commonsense but expanding and powerful England, firmly believing in her own moral virtue.[30] Howkins has argued that this represents a move away from Victorian mediaevalism though all elements of the latter did not disappear over night[31] - the association of the Cotswolds with mediaeval times may indeed be an example of this. Froude's ideas, combined with those of other historians, ensured that "the notion of an Elizabethan 'golden age' passed into popular mythology as the authentic site of 'Merrie England'".[32] It was precisely to this construction that Gibbs spoke when he commented "I have christened the district of which I write the 'Merrie Cotswolds'".[33]

Howkins notes that "the Tudor construction was an extraordinarily powerful one"; firmly rural and above all English.[34] It can be identified in non-fictional rural writing from the interwar years by, for instance, H.V. Morton who argued that it was in Tudor times that England reached her prime and E.M. Forster who dated the countryside "which we love and are losing" to the early 1600s.[35] It was also used to describe the Cotswolds in books which weren't specifically about the area. Vaughan Cornish remarked that Bibury's Tudor architecture had retained "quietude in opulence" in his book *The Scenery of England*.[36] In Chipping Campden S.P.B. Mais found "no false note. The whole village seems to have stood still, and perfect in its stillness, since the sixteenth century".[37]

I do not wish to make exclusive claims for the Middle Ages and Elizabethan times despite the attention that they receive. Robert Henriques, for instance, was

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[30]Howkins, A., 1986, "The Discovery of Rural England", Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (eds), *Englishness, Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom Helm.

[31]*Ibid.*

[32]*Ibid.*, p.71.

[33]Gibbs, J.A., *op cit.*, p.164.

[34]Howkins, A., 1986, *op cit.*, p.71.

[35]Morton, H.V., 1927, *In Search of England*, Methuen and Co., London; Forster, E.M., 1938, "Havoc", Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Reader's Union by arrangement with J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., p.44.

[36]Cornish, V., 1932, *The Scenery of England - A Study of Harmonious Grouping in Town and Country*, Council for the Preservation of Rural England, p.36.

[37]Mais, S.P.B., 1935, *Round About England*, The Richards Press Ltd., London, p.181.

convinced that the loveliness of a landscape depended on its sense of timelessness. In the Cotswolds "the world was still: it has stopped".[38] Guy Dawber sought solitude in the Cotswolds where "the hand of time seems to stand still".[39] A.K. Wickham argued that the chronology of the English village dated from the "epoch of invasion and settlement" through to the beginning of the nineteenth century but that Cotswold villages dated from 1580-1690.[40] It was also possible, as I have shown, for writers to muddle Elizabethan or Tudor times with the Middle Ages or to invoke both.

All this is to suggest that terms like Medieval and Elizabethan are used to signify a distant and better past rather than a precise set of socio-economic, political or cultural circumstances. H.J. Massingham used the past most inconsistently, evoking no less than three 'golden ages' in four books. In *Wold Without End* he looked forward to the day when Dionysus would arrive "with Fawns and Bacchantes to restore beauty and gladness to the world and bring back the Golden Age".[41] Near the end of the same book he argues that from "barrow-times onward we have said goodbye to the blessed childhood of humanity and bartered its scientifically genuine Golden Age for the predatory discord, the cruelty, the inhuman mechanism and all the wonders of civilised society".[42] In *Remembrance*, his autobiography, he further insisted that prehistoric England "in point of landscape and romance and the sweetness of its unvexed solitude, is pretty well the last of England".[43] Of the Middle Ages he wrote

> I think it may be taken as a truism that this piece of cloth, this England, had, in the Middle Ages, been sewn in intricate pattern with such a cluster of gems to the greater glory of God as to be good arras[44] for heaven as any psalmist invented. The nation that defiles its own earth, its body and its sacred heart, is a parricide. But the Middle Ages, in the mysterious intercourse between giving and receiving, not only created a new earth, fairer than it had ever been since it

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[38]Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds*, with drawings by Humphrey Spender, Vision of England series edited by Williams Ellis, C. and Williams Ellis, A., London, Paul Elek, p.99.

[39]Dawber, G., 1896, "Some Cotswold Villages and a Few Reflections", *Architecture*, Volume 1, Number 11, December 1896, p.541.

[40]Wickham, A.K., 1932, *The Villages of England*, B.T. Batsford Ltd., p.4, 38.

[41]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *Wold Without End*, Cobden Sanderson, p.218.

[42]*Ibid.*, p.269.

[43]Massingham, H.J., 1941, *Remembrance*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, p.67.

[44]Arras - rich tapestry.

> was molten fire, but gave to that earth the means of self-maintenance through the multitude of its crafts, resting on and diverging from husbandry.[45]

Massingham further argued that in the fourteenth century the Cotswolds were the purse and heart of England, "a tenacious, contented society moulded by and moulding a particular countryside, the beauty and facilities of one evoking the multiform creative energies of the other".[46]

It was also possible for writers to evoke the past in the most general terms. One of these was James John Hissey who, as I noted in chapter four, was very much of the opinion that the Cotswolds were a "delightful, old world, primitive, and picturesque region" where one could sample the "genuine savour of antiquity" when he passed through the area in 1894.[47] Hissey continued his exploration of the Cotswolds' "old-world nooks and corners" on a later trip taken in 1908. "Hidden away amongst its valleys are many quaint and ancient villages that have suffered little or no change for centuries, and where life seems always dreamy" he wrote.[48] Later still, and a little sheepishly, he offered an apology for using the phrase "old-world" so often, pointing out that he had visited "so many quaint and ancient places that no other word will so well, tersely, and truthfully describe, so I feel bound to use it occasionally, even frequently, though not, I trust, without good cause".[49]

William Holden Hutton, an Oxford Don, kept a vacation home amongst the Cotswolds' "old-world surroundings", and commented that "there is no more delightful part of rural England, none that takes the sojourner back more surely into the old life".[50] Although it is interesting that some writers were more specific than others about which version of the past they felt the Cotswolds to be in, what is most important is the dominance of the past as an idea in the construction of the region's identity. Algernon

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[45]Massingham, H.J., 1941, *op cit.*, p.103.

[46]*Ibid.*, p.78.

[47]Hissey, J.J., 1894, *Through Ten English Counties - the Chronicle of a Driving Tour*, London Richard Bentley and Son, p.197.

[48]Hissey, J.J., 1908, *An English Holiday with Car and Camera*, Macmillan and Co., London, pp.339-340.

[49]Hissey, J.J., 1913, *A Leisurely Tour in England*, Macmillan and Co. Limited, London, p.138.

Gissing paused to consider this, reflecting that "praise of the past and complaints of the present are no new themes in country or any other life, and we all in turn claim that the world jogs on very well in spite of all the querulous lament of each penultimate generation over the general tendency of things".[51] Yet Gissing felt that there was more cause than ever to doubt the direction that contemporary life had taken and look back to the past.

> I suppose we all agree that there have always been periodically in the world's history waves of national disintegration which destroy not only certain elements of social life, but also material features of beauty and interest, which seem never to be restored, and the loss of which succeeding generations continue to deplore. It can scarcely be denied that the country life and landscape of England is now assailed by such a wave, and one, moreover, of ominous and unprecedented breadth and volume. Of course it had been gradually gathering during the life of the oldest of us, but it looks no very much like the curling of a crest.[52]

Gissing expresses another dimension to this theme of 'looking back' which uses ideas of situating the Cotswolds in a distant past combined with sensing the imminent danger posed to this state by the tergiversations of the present. This I have called the 'door ajar theme'.

Door Ajar

The door ajar metaphor describes a sense of being privileged to see and record something just in the process of being lost. The phrase was used by H.J. Massingham in *Remembrance* in 1941 to describe the feeling of being "present at the dying flicker of the old culture which had survived the vicissitudes of four millennia" in the Cotswolds.[53] He was in little doubt that "what had closed the door was the idolatry of material progress but the door was just ajar to let me see into it".[54] Here was "a spot of earth, complete within itself and shining with an inward light, guttering but still alive".[55]

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[50]Holden Hutton, W., 1903, *By Thames and Cotswolds - Sketches of the Country*, Westminster Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., p.7, 14.
[51]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.209.
[52]*Ibid.*, p.209.
[53]Massingham, H.J., 1941, *op cit.*, p.81.
[54]*Ibid.*, p.81.
[55]*Ibid.*, p.72.

As Massingham's sentiments show, the phrase is predicated on the idea that continuity with the past is valuable yet vulnerable and it frequently describes a reaction to a creeping, insidious threat. Raymond Williams' historical escalator similarly describes the process of looking back to a moment when change seriously disrupted the seemingly stable condition of rural England.[56] He traces this from George Sturt who, writing in 1911, looked back to the late 1800s, right through Hardy's novels which referred back to the 1830s, George Eliot who favoured the 1820s and further literature going back to the middle ages.[57]

The idea of the door ajar tends to stress something *in the process of being lost* rather than something irretrievably gone, which seems to be the emphasis of the literature that Williams selects to illustrate the historical escalator. In Cotswold writing the idea of a door ajar to the past receives particular power from the sense that discontinuity, change and progress - already well advanced elsewhere in England to the nation's detriment - have not affected or have only just started to affect the Cotswolds. Ernest Belcher, writing in 1892, noted that Moreton-in-Marsh had, until then, lived its history indifferent to the hum of the outer world. However, "the wave of civilization has not failed to reach its shores, and, though powerless to more than lap its extreme edge, has yet made its subtle influence silently and surely felt".[58] The boundedness of the Cotswolds is emphasised by the suggestion that civilisation is "powerless to more than lap its extreme edge". This imagery is present too in Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie*.

Born in Gloucestershire in 1914 Lee lived in the Cotswold village of Slad with his Mother, three brothers and three sisters. *Cider with Rosie* is an account of his childhood in the village. Lee remembered reading old Granny Trill's almanac with his brothers, seeking out the more ominous pictures. "We saw drawings of skies cracked across by lightening", he recalled,

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[56]Williams, R., 1975, *The Country and the City*, Chatto and Windus.
[57]*Ibid.*
[58]Belcher, E., 1892, *Rambles among the Cotswolds*, Evesham, W. & H. Smith, p.12.

> of church towers falling, multitudes drowning, of men in frock coats shaking warning fingers, of coffins laden with crowns. The drawings were crude but jaggedly vital, like scratches on a prison wall. We relished them as much as did Granny Trill, as signs of an apocalypse that could not touch us. In them we saw the whole outside world, split, convulsive and damned. It had nothing, of course, to do with our village.[59]

In opposition to the fractured, disjointed outside world, village life was characterised by continuity with past ages. Lee likened Slad to a deep-running cave still linked to its antic past. "This cave that we inhabited" he wrote, "looked backwards through chambers that led to our ghostly beginnings... It was something we just had time to inherit, to inherit and dimly know - the blood and beliefs of generations who had been in this valley since the Stone Age". Such a sense of continuity was possible because the village had not as yet been "tidied up or scrubbed clean by electric light, or suburbanized by a Victorian church or papered by cinema screens".[60] Looking back from the late fifties as he wrote *Cider With Rosie*, Lee pointed out that "that continuous contact has at last been broken, the deeper caves sealed off for ever. But arriving, as I did, at the end of that age, I caught the whiffs of something as old as the glaciers".[61] The final chapter of the books, called Last Days, shows how the end of Lee's childhood seemed to coincide with the end of "a thousand years of life".[62]

Looking out over the Cotswold landscape, Gibbs similarly reflected that "although no human habitation is anywhere to be seen, the air is full of the spirits of bygone generations and of bygone races of men. There are traces of humanity in all directions, wherever you eye may gaze, but they are the traces of a forgotten people".[63] Alongside the general sense that the door was barely ajar were very specific concerns about the seemingly soon to be relict architecture, craft skills, dialect and traditions of the Cotswolds.

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[59]Lee, L., 1985, *Cider with Rosie*, Penguin, p.85. First Published 1959.
[60]*Ibid.*, p.104-105.
[61]*Ibid.*, p.105.
[62]*Ibid.*, p.216.
[63]Gibbs, J.A., *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, p.99.

Architecture and Craft Skills

Henry Branch was pleased to note at the beginning of *Cotswold and Vale* that "not many districts in England are so unravaged by 'Civilisation' and the Railway as the widespreading Cotswolds".[64] His book was subtitled *Glimpses of Past and Present in Gloucestershire* but it was consideration of the effect of the present on the past that gave him most pause. At Chedworth he was delighted by grey gables

> flung about the landscape... Rising above the line of vision on one hand, sinking below it on the other, clinging to the sides of steep meadows, nestling in the sheltered nooks, or braving the winds on the height, they bear collectively or in detail the impress of that impersonal artist, the Genius of Cotswold Architecture.[65]

Branch's enjoyment was tempered by the realisation that the loveliness of Chedworth and other Cotswold villages was the exception rather than the rule in England. "Then comes the lament" he wrote soberly, "The old honest work, the old veracious style, are passing away: and the villages, many of them, can show as glaring examples of feelinglessness and tasteless construction as the towns".[66] Chedworth, however, remained "delightfully unravaged".[67]

The "passing peeps" of fertile farms and time-toned farmsteads afforded to James John Hissey in 1908 were also peeps through the door ajar. These small settlements were preserved "in all their ancient peacefulness" by the encircling hills. "To us" mused Hissey "they wore a remote and unsophisticated air: the march of progress and the 'thoughts that shake mankind' leave them undisturbed. They are the 'sleepy hollows' of the land where the serpent forgot to leave his trail".[68] In the same year P.H. Ditchfield was similarly concerned that "the building of beautiful cottages is almost a lost art, if we may judge from the hideous examples which modern buildings are accustomed to rear

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[64]Branch, H., 1907, *op cit.*, p.83.
[65]*Ibid.*, p.83.
[66]*Ibid.*, p.83.
[67]*Ibid.*, p.83.
[68]Hissey, J.J., 1908, *op cit.*, p.228.

amidst beautiful scenery that claimed exemption from such desecration".[69] Algernon Gissing likened the loss of some particularly fine examples of Cotswold architecture in Willersey to the fading strains of an old song.[70] H.W. Timperley, in his introduction to the promotional booklet *Broadway and the Cotswolds*, was dismayed to find that the craft of dry-walling was declining and that he was present at the last moments of a craft which had come down to dry-wallers "from men who lived on the hills three or four thousand years ago".[71] J.B. Priestley was similarly concerned by the demise of stone-masonry. A few old stone-masons were still at work when he passed through the Cotswolds in the course of his *English Journey*, but "they grow old and feeble", like Old George a mason still working in his seventies. "Old George has always been a mason, and his father and grandfather were masons before him" lamented Priestley, "they were all masons, those Georges; they built the whole Cotswolds; men of their hands, men with a trade, craftsmen".[72]

This celebration of craftsmanship before it disappeared forever contained in it a subtle criticism of industrialisation. Priestley went on to make this point more forcefully and in general terms in his introduction to *The Beauty of Britain*, a collection of essays by various authors published by Batsford in 1935. "Before the mines and factories came, and long before we went from bad to worse with our arterial roads and petrol stations and horrible brick bungalows" railed Priestley,

> this country must have been an enchantment, designed by God to be the earthly paradise of wandering watercolourists. Even now, after we have been busy for so long flinging mud at this fair pale face, the enchantment still remains. Between the cities, away from the arterial roads, there are still bright tracts of this earthly paradise.[73]

Such disapprobation of industrial life was Murray's theme when she pointedly commented that Chipping Campden

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[69]Ditchfield, P.H., 1908, *The Charm of the English Village*, B.T. Batsford, London, p.47.

[70]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.153.

[71]Timperley, H.W., 1933, "Introduction", Carrington, N. (ed), *Broadway and the Cotswolds*, printed and published for the Lygon Arms, Broadway by the Kyoch Press, Witton, Birmingham, p.15.

[72]Priestley, J.B., 1984, *English Journey*, William Heinemann Ltd., London, p.45. First published 1934.

[73]Priestley, J.B., 1941-42, "The Beauty of Britain", *The Beauty of Britain - A Pictorial Survey*, B.T. Batsford, London, p.1. First published 1935.

> has not been robbed of its peculiar charm as an unspoilt survival of the days when men made money without losing their souls... Humanly speaking it seems safe from desecration - a witness to the beauty that once was England before her ancient towns were blighted by the growth of industrialisation.[74]

Burford was similarly praised by Murray who called it "an asset to be preserved as an irreplaceable treasure".[75] Here is another dimension of the door ajar theme which is also present in P.H. Ditchfield's work; the notion of recording the thing in danger of being lost so that at least a memory of it might be preserved.

Ditchfield argued in *The Charm of the English Village* that good examples of English domestic architecture should be "sketched, admired and noted at once, as year by year their numbers are decreasing".[76] He picked up this theme again in *Vanishing England* - the very title of which announced his intention to preserve the best of England in sketches and prose. "Although much has gone", he wrote, "there is still much remaining that is good, that reveals the artistic skill and taste of our forefathers, and recalls the wonders of old-time".[77] In the preface to *Rural England - Cottage and Village Life* Ditchfield candidly set out why his project of recording England had become necessary:

> The eyes of our politicians are at the present time cast upon rural affairs, and town-bred speakers threaten us with many changes. Already they have wrought much mischief. The breaking-up of estates, caused by the heavy and merciless taxation levied on the land, the dethronement of the squires and agricultural depression, have produced consternation in many village communities. Village industries that provided remunerative occupation for our rustics have been crushed out, and we may expect further losses and revolutions. Agitators are eager to pull down out old cottages and erect new ones which lack all the grace and charm of our old-fashioned dwellings.[78]

In the face of this Ditchfield concluded that "it is well to catch a glimpse of rural England before the transformation comes and to preserve a record of the beauties that

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[74]Murray, A., 1930, *op cit.*, p.59.
[75]*Ibid.*, p.75.
[76]Ditchfield, P.H., 1908, *op cit.*, p.47.
[77]Ditchfield, P.H., 1993, op cit., p.1.
[78]*Ibid.*, "Preface", no page number.

for a time remain".[79] Thus the idea of a door ajar is used to support a reactionary agenda similar in many respects to the views held by H.J. Massingham and others. A criticism of both present architecture and agriculture is implicit, for instance, in Louise Imogen Guiney's remark that "the hills will surely welcome hand-in-hand with the architect, the unprofessional lover of that old agrarian or pastoral life which Chaucer and Shakespeare looked upon, and which is not yet wholly extinct in this new restless England, changing its whole spirit under our very eyes".[80] J.C. Squire sternly closed his introduction to Edmund Blunden's *The Scenery of England* with the warning that it would be "the business of our own age to decide whether [the book] is to be a record of abiding things, or a beautiful epitaph".[81] Blunden himself exclaimed "the fact cannot be avoided: how much that we loved is going or gone!".[82]

Traditions

Writing in a promotional guidebook for the Cotswold Stores, Reginald Wills observed that "in every corner of these quiet towns and villages, old traditions lurk and historic associations persist. Old customs prevail longer amidst the hills".[83] Among such surviving traditions was the Scuttlebrook Fair which, for H.J. Massingham symbolised the historical continuity of the Cotswolds. "This celebration" he wrote, "is the sole surviving relict of Dover's Hill games, so that thin fibre still links the booths of Leysbourne with that tremendous continuity of the western high places which saw the funerary games of the megalith builders, the Olympic contests of Robert Dover's anti-Puritan crusade and the shin-kicking bouts of the nineteenth century".[84] The latter was a pastime that Massingham was particularly interested in and he used it to mount a criticism of both Victorian gentility and the idea of tradition. "In the last century" he wrote,

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[79]*Ibid.*, "Preface", no page number.

[80]Guiney, L.I., 1913, *op cit.*, p.274.

[81]Squire, J.C., 1932, "Introduction", Blunden, E., *The Scenery of England*, Longmans, Green and Co., vii.

[82]Blunden, E., in Giles, J. and Middleton, T., 1995, *Writing Englishness 1900-1950*, Routledge, p.83.

[83]Wills, R., c.1929, *The Cotswold Country - An Illustrated Handbook describing the Glories of a Charming Countryside with some Notes on the Progress of the Cotswold Stores*, The British Publishing Company Ltd., Crypt House Press, Gloucester, p.7.

[84]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.146.

> shin-kicking contests, village team against village team, were all the rage of North Cotswold... From a man in my own village I learned that an old man of seventy, a stone breaker of Broadway whom he knew thirty-five years ago, used to display his shins with pride, shins that were like corrugated iron from his achievements when "Broddy fowt Kyaden [Broadway fought Campden]... I heard that an old warrior, dead some years, used to sit in the pub and have his shins beaten by a deal plank as a form of training, while one of the heroes of Campden used to 'thrape' his shins with a hammer in order to be deemed worthy of inclusion in the team... I learned of a champion who... would repair to the Eight Bells, where his friends armed with a coal hammer, would 'thrape' the soft part of his shins. When the great day came, he wore a pair of boots tipped with iron and, entering the ring at Dover's Hill, would throw down his cap as a challenge to all the grey villages in the neighbourhood.[85]

In the telling of this Massingham invites his readers to be amused, but delivers a stern message at the end. "Victorian gentility was indeed only skin deep" he wrote, adding that there was no imbecility or barbarity that human beings would not practice as long as it was sanctified by custom.[86] "Habit, convention, social glamour and mental inertia befog our vision" he went on. This was also a sharp criticism of tradition. Standing near the Rollright Stones Massingham was overwhelmed by "the extraordinary tenacity of social custom, belief and institution" in the Cotswolds. But rather than approving of this, he continued somberly "I realised that it is they rather than instinctive human nature which are responsible for so often contorting the face of man".[87] Here the door is a ajar to a past that Massingham cannot approve of and thus some deeply ingrained social customs like fox hunting received sharp criticism. It was uncharacteristic for Massingham to be so critical of the past as his defence of Cotswold dialect shows (see below). However, this demonstrates that criticisms of the present *and* the past could be implied by the use of the door ajar technique in non fictional rural writing.

Massingham's criticisms of social custom hints at the role of collective memory in maintaining traditions. Samuel has argued that popular memory is the antithesis of written history:

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[85] *Ibid.*, p.47-48.
[86] *Ibid.*, p.48-49.
[87] *Ibid.*, p.44.

> It eschews notions of determination and seizes instead on omens, portents and signs. It measures change genealogically in terms of generations rather than centuries, epochs or decades. It has no developmental sense of time, but assigns events to the mythicised 'good old days' (or bad old days) of workplace lore, or the "once upon a time" of the storyteller.[88]

As a method for maintaining local traditions and custom, popular or collective memory was seen to be under threat as older generations of villagers in the Cotswolds were not replaced by others who would receive local knowledge, customs and stories - causing that door to the past to shut. This was reflected partly in Massingham's quest for stories of shin kicking; in the end he resorted to "an old almshouseman" whose voice "was as thin as a yellow hammer's and face like a brown pudding stuffed with almonds and raisins".[89] Although, as I have shown, Massingham was somewhat ambivalent about whether maintaining all traditions was a good thing, Algernon Gissing was gravely concerned by their passing and the demise of local popular memory which maintained them:

> We all constantly bewail the effects of our industrial and commercial system upon the population engulfed in it, yet are doing our best to reduce the solitary source of a more inspiring life to the same deadening level. With almost wholly technical instruction, and recreation almost exclusively drawn from whist drives, comic songs, jazz and fox-trot dances, or other 'latest from London' attraction which allure the rustics to our village entertainments, it is not realised that there are hardly any rustics left and that the characteristic (if unconscious) sentiments of country life are getting poisoned at the very source... When our country life has finally lost its memory as well as its charm
>
> > This happy breed of me, this little world,
> > This precious stone set in a silver sea
>
> will be numbering its days indeed, whatever triumphant figures the statisticians may be elaborating in their blue books.[90]

Clearly this was not just an argument about local uniqueness and custom but the influence of this on national life and well-being. Similar concerns run through the issue of dialect and the door ajar theme.

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[88]Samuel, R., 1994, *Theatres of Memory, Volume One: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Verso, p.6.

[89]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.48.

Dialect

J. Arthur Gibbs included a long discussion about dialect in *A Cotswold Village*, taking pains to record some examples of the dialect, among them a verse which described the characteristics of the language:

> If thee true 'Glarcestershire' would know,
> I'll tell thee how us always zays un;
> Put 'I' for 'me', and 'a' for 'o'
> On every possible occasion.
>
> When in doubt squeeze in a 'w' -
> 'Stwuns' not 'stones'. And don't forget, zur,
> That 'thee' must stand for 'thou' and 'you':
> 'Her' for 'she', and vice versa.
>
> Put 'v' for 'f'; for 's' put 'z';
> 'Th' and 't' we change to 'd' -
> So dry an kip this in thine yead,
> An' thou wills't talk as plain as we.[91]

He also reproduces "George Riddler's Oven" - a poem about King Charles I - and a lengthy passage from the book *Roger Plowman's Excursion to London*, both written in Gloucestershire dialect. The latter, a book published in 1879, was the tale of the ingenuous Roger Plowman who, on his trip to London, gets into fabulous scrapes because of his naiveté.[92] Gibbs reports that when this tale was related at a penny reading in his village "one or two of the audience had to be carried out in hysterics - they laughed so much; and another man fell backwards off his chair, owing to the extreme comicality of it".[93]

Though Gibbs was entertained and intrigued by the Gloucestershire dialect and the stories told in it, there was a sombre message behind the amusement. "George Riddler's Oven" was the relic of an oral tradition, with written copies of the poem never seen in the village. Gibbs complained that "in these days of education the real old-

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[90]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.183.

[91]Gibbs, J.A., *op cit.*, p.77.

[92]Anonymous, 1879, *Roger Plowman's Excursion to London with Adventures and Recollections in Gloucestershire*, London, Simpkin, Marshall and Co; Cirencester, W.H. Smith and Son, Steam Press.

fashioned dialect is seldom heard; among the older peasants a few are found who speak it, but in twenty years time it will be a thing of the past".[94] Gloucestershire speech also featured in a chapter of Henry Branch's *Cotswold and Vale - Glimpses of Past and Present in Gloucestershire* and the introduction to Major Gambier Parry's *The Spirit of the Old Folk*.[95] Gambier-Parry talked about the dialect of the Cotswolds and its Saxon roots and recalled imitating the Gloucestershire speech which he called "the dialect of the dear old Country".[96] He related how he and a friend "laid by in memory exactly what the old folk among our many friends... said to us in the inimitable way".[97] There is a clear sense in Gambier-Parry's opening comments of a dialect and a way of life on the way out, which is emphasised when he remarks "I'm sure you will agree with me in one thing, and this is that the spirit of the old folk is not dead *yet* (italics added)".[98]

Stanley Baldwin particularly mentioned his regret at the passing of regional dialects in his 1926 speech "England". "Time was, two centuries ago" he said

> when you could have told by his speech from which part of England every member of Parliament came. He spoke the speech of his fathers, and I regret that the dialects have gone, and I regret that by a process which for want of a better name we have agreed among ourselves to call education, we are drifting away from the language of the people and losing some of the best English words and phrases which have lasted in the country though centuries, to make us all talk one uniform and inexpressive language.[99]

Baldwin's speech illustrates the link between the door ajar theme and the idea of finding England everywhere which I have talked about in previous chapters. Regional distinctiveness in architecture, culture or - as Baldwin notes - dialect were important to the strength and character of the nation. However, these characteristics were seen to be entirely destroyed in some places by the uniforming influence of popular culture and

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[93]Gibbs, J.A., *op cit.*, p.81.
[94]*Ibid.*, p.81.
[95]Branch, H., 1907, *op cit.*; Major Gambier-Parry, 1913, *The Spirit of the Old Folk*, London, Smith, Elder and Co.
[96]*Ibid.*, p.vii.
[97]*Ibid.*, p.vii-viii.
[98]*Ibid.*, p.xii-xiii.
[99]Baldwin, S., 1927, *op cit.*, p.6.

education, improved transport and communication links and inappropriate building styles and materials.

Notwithstanding this, the regional identity of the Cotswolds was perceived to be still intact enough for the best characteristics of the nation to exist albeit under profound threat. The door was still ajar enough in the Cotswolds allowing a glimpse of the best of regional and national life, but its vulnerability was palpable. "It is grim" wrote H.J. Massingham, "to see how speedily the old tongue is vanishing".[100] His concerns also had a national dimension and he delivered a critical invective on the subject of the English language.

> There must still be a number of people scattered over England who deplore the mechanisation of the English language, once the richest, the most dramatic and flexible in the world. The Age of the Machine has no doubt increased the capital of English or pseudo-English words, but the standardisation that goes with it has been like a blight upon the vitality, saltiness, and expressiveness of common speech. Just as arterial roads plunge through the countryside without recognising or deferring to the individual varieties between one area and another, so the era of mass-production enforces a like uniformity both upon our general language itself and its local peculiarities. The increasing life-poverty of our bountiful tongue, stored with the honey of ages of thought and human drama, is cruelly illustrated by our more and more reliance on Americanese for our slang terms, our homelier idiom and our means of labeling popular new inventions.[101]

It becomes clear, then, that in addition to lamenting the passing of architecture, dialect and traditions, the authors using the door ajar theme are seeing the last of the 'best of England'. Algernon Gissing felt that Chipping Campden afforded an epitome of centuries of national life. "Not only do the old stone record [the centuries], the old crafts still linger, old words, old habits, old beliefs, are firmly implanted".[102] Here again the notion of an organic community is reinforced by the imagery of planting and the emphasis on age and continuity.

100Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.240.
101*Ibid.*, p.281-282.
102Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.90.

Keeping the Door Ajar

Temporal and Spatial Boundedness in the Cotswolds

It is clear from the work of James John Hissey, Spence Edge and others that part of the reason why past ages were seen to have survived in the Cotswolds was the area's perceived remoteness from the modern world. This was most clearly expressed by H.W. Timperley in his *Cotswold Book.* Timperley chose Condicote as "the village I go to when I want to withdraw so far from industrial England that its existence can be forgotten except as a dark impermanence rapidly fading from memory".[103] He went on

> The village may be dream-like in its remoteness from those scenes, but... there is a living presence as real as the presence of the uplands enfolding it, an almost as slow in response to change as they. In such a place time as a present moment seems unreal; men and seasons pass... but these passing do not raise a ripple on the still deeps, without beginning and without end, into which I feel that time has settled here.[104]

Similarly, if less poetically, Hissey wrote of villages lying half sheltered and forgotten in a hollow.[105] When Herbert Evans found Chipping Campden "outwardly but little changed for some three hundred years" he explained this by reference to the town's position "retired in a fold of the hills, apart from any main road, and unmolested by the railway".[106] This was also the impression of J.B. Priestley who, upon leaving Broadway

> crept into on of those green little valleys that at once make you feel so oddly remote, miles and miles from anywhere, clean out of the world... you only have to take a turn or two from the main road there, into one of those enchanted little valleys, these misty cups of verdure and grey walls, and you are gone and lost, somewhere at the end of space and dubiously situated even in time, with all four dimensions wrecked behind you. The map may tell you that you are only so many miles from Broadway or Cheltenham but you do not need the elaborate dubieties of the mathematicians and astronomers to tell you that the map is mere convention and not the fantastic truth. This, then, was one of these valleys, and

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103Timperley, H.W., *A Cotswold Book*, London, Jonathan Cape, p.124.

104*Ibid.*, p.124.

105Hissey, J.J., 1913, *op cit.*

106Evans, H.A., 1905, *Highways and Byways in Oxford and the Cotswolds* Macmillan and Co. Ltd., p.182.

> one of the best of them, looking as if it had decided to detach itself from the rest of England about the time of the Civil War.[107]

On the other hand, Chipping Norton had, according to Spencer Edge, been "blunted by contact with the out-side world, and its old-world bouquet lost by modern blending"[108] as a consequence of its proximity to 'the outside world' in the east of the Cotswolds. Furthermore, Algernon Gissing complained that the "almost perfect hill village" of Snowshill was "owing to its proximity to the brow of the hills ...more within reach of polite life, and so cannot retain quite so much of its primitive wold character".[109] Going *Round About England* in 1935 S.P.B. Mais reported that Chipping Campden, Burford, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold, the Slaughters and the Swells had escaped "all taint of vulgarity, any hint of disharmony". This was a result of their position. "Lying on the Cotswold uplands, or in the fold of a Cotswold valley" he noted, "has luckily meant an avoidance of pink bungaloiditis".[110]

I do not wish to rehearse ideas or sources used in chapter four, but wish to emphasise the interconnectedness of ideas at large there and in this chapter. Temporal boundedness - the feeling that the Cotswolds were permanently in some other age and should never succumb to the march of time and progress - was reinforced by a sense of spatial boundedness - that the Cotswolds were cut off and remote from the rest of England. This was an idea that also informed H.V. Morton's explorations of England. "I will see what lies off the beaten track" he announced and expected to find a world of kings and abbots, knights and cavaliers, dreams and legends.[111] The regional idea and issues of temporal and spatial boundedness can be also be found in the construction of England as a series of geological layers or strata, which I examine in the next section. In Chapter Seven I will look more closely at how the remoteness of the Cotswolds was seen to be violated by popular discoveries of the area.

107Priestley, J.B., 1984, *op cit.*, p.48-49.
108Edge, S., 1909, *op cit.*, p.161.
109Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.62
110Mais, S.P.B., 1935, *op cit.*, p.181.
111Morton, H.V., 1927, *op cit.*, p.4.

Temporal and Spatial Boundedness in England

I will now examine how temporal and spatial boundedness were used in writing about England and Englishness, paying particular attention to the ways in which England's past and present were conceptualised using geological metaphors and imaginary lines dividing up the country.

In 1924 the author known only as F.V.M. imagined a line running from the mouth of the Severn to the Wash that divided what (s)he called Metropolitan England from Industrial England. (S)he went on "the hypothetical line by which we have so sharply severed the north from the south is not entirely an artificial one. It corresponds to a ridge which runs nearly across England, and which form one of the four main watersheds of the whole country".[112] The ridge (s)he describes is the band of Oolitic limestone of which the Cotswolds are a part. Here, (s)he argued, "history and pre-history meet" among the barrows, trackways and settlements of the uplands.[113] F.V.M.s separation of the metropolitan from the industrial was echoed in C.E.M. Joad's division of the country from east to west.

In his introduction to *The English Counties* in 1948 Joad drew a line from Newcastle to Portsmouth and announced a distinction between the characteristics of the east and those of the west. In the east, he argued,

> is the England that braces. It stands in the intellectual sphere, for theological heresy and moral controversy, for mathematics and metaphysical poetry and for physical science; in the political, for radicalism, reformism and sturdy individualism; in the aesthetic, for clear, pale blue skies... In matters of the body, this half of England stands for dry skins, bright eyes and great gales of physical energy; the general attitude of its people is common sense, realistic and matter-of-fact; they stand no nonsense, and, in particular, no snobbish nonsense, about kings, priests, nobles and what not... The easterners tend to view that there is only one order of reality, the natural order, and as a matter of common prudence they hold that we had better make the best and the most of it, and not go a-whoring after mystical will-o'-the-wisps.[114]

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[112]F.V.M., 1924, *Cotswold Ways*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., Ltd. in conjunction with the Great Western Railway, p.5-6.

[113]*Ibid.*, p.6.

[114]Joad, C.E.M., (ed), 1948, "Introduction", *The English Counties*, Odhams Press Ltd., p.9.

And on the west:

> is mysticism. The world is not all of a piece nor is there only one level of reality; what is more, unseen things lie very near to the surface of the familiar world... There is in the west, a greater feeling for beauty, especially natural beauty... and above all for music. West of the line are idling, day-dreaming, brooding and mooning; the passions are disposed to sultriness... there are overtones and undertones, half lights and hidden depths. Here are Anglicanism, port-lovers, woman-haters, royalists and Jacobites.[115]

What is important here is not the precise spatial dynamics of these divisions, but that these divisions could be made at all and were felt to be useful in identifying the defining characteristics of Englishness. Joad is describing in the west what he believes to be a *rural* disposition and a corresponding urban or industrial disposition in the east. This is particularly evident when he writes "the colours of the eastern half of England are light browns and pale blues and greens (one thinks of the colour of the old carriages and engines of the Great Northern and Great Eastern Railways)", associating the colours of the east with machinery.[116] It is also apparent in the characteristics he ascribes to each region; he constructs an eastern disposition that is industrious, pragmatic, down-to-earth. Joad acknowledged that such a generalization of England could not be watertight but nevertheless challenged

> the Londoner who takes a train from Paddington or Waterloo on a Saturday afternoon and arrives in the evening in Surrey or Sussex or Wiltshire or Dorset or Devon or Cornwall - above all in Devon or Cornwall - to deny that in the evening he finds himself a different person, lazier, stupider, sleepier, but also kindlier and more serene.[117]

There is a sense here that time passes slowly in the west, emphasised by Joad's earlier reference to Royalists and Jacobites which situates the region in the past.

The idea of dividing England into parcels of land was evident in Fagg and Hutching's *Introduction to Regional Surveying* from 1930. They proposed three

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[115] *Ibid.*, p.9.
[116] *Ibid.*, p.9-10.
[117] *Ibid.*, p.10.

principles by which a large area might be subdivided. First, natural regions with boundaries determined by physiographic features or social groupings. Second, areas which have administrative boundaries for their limits and third, areas with geometrical outlines.[118] The ways of dividing up the country that I have discussed were less functional and depended upon a confident delineation of regional characteristics and a spatial conceptualisation of time which located specific parts of England at particular points in history. The Regional Survey saw the present as "a mosaic, as it were, of the survivals of the past and incipient phases of the future"[119] and thus sought to "write in its coverage the past and present of the place, and plot and plan for the future".[120] In contrast to this, the identification of regions and geological layers of time had the effect of distancing the past from the present and the future and consciously setting aside parts of England; defining them by their difference and superiority to those parts of the country that had been ravaged by unbanisation and industrialisation.

As well as dividing the country into regions, Joad used temporal boundedness to create an aspatial characteristion of England and Englishness. In 1935 he addressed the notion of two countries existing side by side in England. "There is" he argued, "the country as it was, the country through which I had been walking that summer's day; and there is the country as it is becoming and as it will increasingly become".[121] The characteristics of each England described the best and worst the countryside had to offer. The first country "is quiet and peaceful, and the people who live in it are dull and a little stupid. Their status is prescribed by a well-defined hierarchy. There are the squire and the parson, the farmer, the yeoman, and the agricultural labourers...".[122] Here exactly are Massingham's five types of village inhabitant, crucial to the organic community that I examined in chapter five.[123] "It is still possible" Joad went on

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[118]Fagg, C.C. and Hutchings, G.E., 1930, *An Introduction to Regional Surveying*, Cambridge University Press.

[119]*Ibid.*, p.1.

[120]Matless, D., 1990, *Ordering the Land: The Preservation of the English Countryside 1918-1939*, Unpublished University of Nottingham Ph.D. Thesis, p.110.

[121]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *The Book of Joad - A Belligerent Autobiography*, Faber and Faber, p.199.

[122]*Ibid.*, p.199.

[123]Massingham, H.J., 1942, "Village Bedrock", *Gloucestershire Countryside*, Volume 4, no.7, April-June 1942.

> to find even in the counties bordering on London villagers who know no more of the metropolis than did their ancestors in the days when pack-horses performed the office of railways and motor-lorries. When it is invaded this country does not change; it disappears often with startling rapidity and is replaced by country number two.[124]

The fragility of country number one is clear. Country number two was the country that surrounded towns and adjoins the main road. Its characteristic features were

> petrol pumps and garages, tea places usually Old English, tin shanties, bungalows and innumerable notice-boards. It has few inhabitants but it is a dormitory town for town workers and a corridor for motorists. Maiden ladies retire into it and keep poultry farms. Those of the original working-folk who remain in it abandon their traditional occupations and become parasites on the motorists and suburbanites; they keep wireless sets, buy gramophones and tea-cakes in frilled papers, batten on the Sunday press and grow basely rich.[125]

What is interesting is that country one is defined socially by its occupants and their status. Country number two, on the other hand, is a collection of unnatural intrusions (one might even say *inorganic* intrusions, since Joad sees them as so alien and damaging to the organic community that he describes) and reprehensible working folk who abandon their traditional occupations and become the object of Joad's opprobrium. This distinction is in part explained by Joad's remark that country number one had a life of its own while country number two derived its life from the town. He went on

> To pass from country number one into country number two, *is to pass from one age into another* and from one civilisation into another; it is to exchange silence, dignity and beauty for noise, vulgarity and ugliness [italics added] And country number two encroaches continually on country number one. A few years ago it comprised only the main roads, the suburbs, the coastal towns and a few 'picturesque' villages and 'beauty spots'; but it spreads like a blight and every year the diseased area spreads further.[126]

Here precisely is the door ajar theme once more but also more than that. Joad sees not only something in the process of being lost, but two countries fundamentally different from each other and he uses this construction of two countries to separate good from bad, ideologically sound from socially and culturally awry and, crucially, past from

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[124]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.199.

[125]*Ibid.*, p.200.

[126]*Ibid.*, p.200.

present. It could be argued that this is what the door ajar metaphor does wherever it is used. But in Joad's work it reaches its most perspicuous realisation in his ideas about regions and layers of time in England.

Joad's treatise on two countries appeared in chapter eight of his autobiography, entitled "Dislikings IV - The Horrors of the Countryside". His purpose in this chapter was to explode what he called "the England myth" and in so doing call his readers' attention to the 'real' condition of the countryside. It was his view that the myth perpetrated by "a long line of essayists and enshrined in some of the greatest poetry in any language" was preventing every right-thinking person from taking action against inconsiderate motorists, trippers, planners, Jerry builders and civil servants.

Joad's position was developed in *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country* in which he argued that England could be divided into four parts. The first consisted of pre-industrial towns; the second was the England of the industrial revolution; the third was the England of the twentieth century and the fourth the "England which is still country".[127] Of the pre-industrial towns Bath, Kings Lynn, Ludlow, Chipping Campden and Burford stood out as relatively unspoiled but "one can hardly bear to visit them for fear that something should have happened in the interval since one's last visit to impair their loveliness".[128] What characterised these towns was that they had been "crystalised in a state of arrested development" that neither the nineteenth nor the twentieth centuries had managed to demolish. They could be preserved by restricting development to towns which were "already ugly and therefore comparatively unspoilable".[129]

On a journey to a city that he called merely 'X' Joad encountered the second England of nineteenth century industrialisation. "The last twenty miles [into the city] I did in the car - twenty miles of almost continuous squalor" he wrote, and went on

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[127]*Ibid.*, p.165.

[128]*Ibid.*, p.176.

[129]Joad, C.E.M., 1945, *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*, Faber and Faber, p.177.

> The sun which had been shining all day from a cloudless sky disappeared behind a pall of smoke; the land was flat as a pancake and ranged along the riverbank were cranes, derricks and railway sheds; chimneys belched smoke; factories and mills were surrounded by acres of squalid yard; the road ran through miles of streets lines with little, mean houses, houses which were covered with a coat of grime. No single building distinguished itself, by reason either of its size or its beauty, from the mean monotony of the prevailing architecture. As the car penetrated deeper into this district, my heart sank.[130]

Joad's principal objection was that in 'X' and other cities industry "descended upon a piece of land, ate it up and moved on elsewhere" at the expense of rural areas. A similar complaint cropped up in his third category; twentieth century industrial and dormitory England;

> This is the England of the Great West Road, flanked by factories and intersected at right angles by other roads lined with pink houses, and streaming with cars... this England, the England of the factory and the spreading dormitory suburb, is a lonely England and lacks almost all those places of meeting in which human beings have traditionally gathered, known their neighbours and felt the stirrings of civic consciousness... These spreading suburbs have no heart and no head, organs which above all others are essential for the generation of social consciousness.[131]

Joad had three objections to this England. First, it intervened between the first and second Englands and the country by building itself round the fringes of the towns and causing them to spread and the country to recede. Second, owing to the fact that it was unplanned it spread over a disproportionate amount of land which it eats up at the expense of the country. Third, "it is liable to break out anywhere on the surface of the English countryside".[132] The solution was to build flats, garden cities, satellite towns and suitable terraces.

Joad's fourth England - that of the countryside - was "the England I care for and on whose behalf this book has been written"[133] and merited a whole chapter. Joad was concerned that the English countryside should not be relegated to "the category of past things". Joad's monody went on:

130*Ibid.*, p.184.
131*Ibid.*, p.187.
132*Ibid.*, p.188.
133*Ibid.*, p.202.

> no village will remain unspoilt; none, that is to say, that has not yet been spoilt by us will remain unspoilt. There will be no little pub in which the townsman can still hear the rustics talk; there will be no farmhouse with its inglenook, home-made teas and rows of hams hanging from the rafters in the kitchen; no shepherd's hut, no secret places in the hills, no hidden sources of the streams. In a word, there will be no place that is different, for our civilisation will have ironed out with the dead hand of its suburban uniformity the little differences and individualities that have survived from a more varied past.[134]

Joad's four England's are predicated on temporal boundedness - being able to situate parts of England in specific pasts and use this to lavish criticism or praise on them. The pre-industrial past - which is explicitly evoked in the first England and implicit in the fourth - is characterised by a stable countryside and smaller towns and is the object of Joad's approbation. The recent industrial past and Joad's present were censured. Joad reorganised the four Englands into strictly chronoglocial order for his introduction to *The English Counties*, placing the England of the country first, pre-industrial England second, nineteenth century England third and twentieth century England fourth.[135] He called them the 'four layers', introducing a geological metaphor and imagery of these layers being laid down on top of each other like strata: "The history of the English counties this last hundred years of so" he wrote, "has been the history of the encroachment of the third and fourth Englands, and especially the fourth, upon the first and second".[136]

Joad was not alone in proposing different Englands. In the course of his English Journey J.B. Priestley mused "I had seen England. I had seen a lot of Englands. How many? At once, three disengaged themselves from the shifting mass".[137] The first, like Joad's first England, was "Old England, the country of the cathedrals and minsters and manor houses and inns, of Parson and Squire; guide-book and quaint highways and byways of England... we all know this England which cannot be improved upon in this

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[134]*Ibid.*, p.202.

[135]Joad, C.E.M., (ed), 1948, *op cit.*, p.10.

[136]*Ibid.*, p.10.

[137]Priestley, J.B. in Giles, J. and Middleton, T., 1995, *op cit.*, p.103.

world".[138] This was a rural version of England with its continuity with a rich history privileged by the capital O of Old.

The second England consisted "of coal, iron, steel, cotton, wool, railway; of thousands of little houses all alike...a cynically devastated countryside, sooty dismal little towns, and still sootier grim fortress-like cities".[139] This England - an essentially industrial and urban one - was to be found for the most part in the Midlands and the north but also "existed everywhere".[140] The third England was the new post-first world war place which belonged "more to the age itself that to this particular island".[141] With these words Priestley distances this place from his England, arguing that America was its real birth place;

> This is the England of arterial and by-pass roads, of filling stations and factories that look like exhibition buildings, of giant cinema and dance halls and cafes, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail bars, Woolworth's, motorcoaches, wireless, hiking, factory girls looking like actresses, grey hound racing and dirt tracks, swimming pools, and everything given away for cigarette coupons.[142]

This was "the newest England", which with nineteenth century England had written themselves over all that which made Priestley's first England worthwhile and meaningful. Nineteenth century England had "done more harm than good to the real enduring England. It had found a green and pleasant land and had left a wilderness of bricks. It had blackened fields, poisoned rivers, ravaged the earth, and sown filth and ugliness with a lavish hand".[143] Post-war England, on the other hand, was wrecking individuality and spontaneity with monotony and standardisation. "I cannot help feeling" Priestley wrote, "that this new England is lacking in character, zest, gusto, flavour, bite, drive, originality, and that this is a serious weakness".[144] Yet writing only a year later in 1935, Phillip Gibbs - though recognising two different Englands - was in buoyant and optimistic mood. "We are still a nation of individualists" he asserted, and went on;

138*Ibid.*, p.103.
139*Ibid.*, p.104.
140*Ibid.*, p.104.
141*Ibid.*, p.106.
142*Ibid.*, p.105.
143*Ibid.*, p.107.
144*Ibid.*, p.109.

> The two worlds live side by side - the old world England hardly touched by the increasing rhythm of the speed mania which is called Progress, hardly affected by the trash of the mind, the jazzing up of life, the restlessness, the triviality, which goes by the name of the Modern Spirit. Yet in this other world of bricks and mortar, of picture palaces, of factories and flats, and electric trams and chain stores, there is something still very traditional in the crowds that pass, and in the individuals who make up the crowd. All this modernisation is, I find, very superficial. I mean, it has not yet bitten into the soul of England or poisoned its brain.[145]

Gibbs is bluff but, despite the confident tone, uncertain. When he speaks of the England that is "still beautiful" with meadows that are "not *yet* taped out by the jerry builder", trees "not *yet* marked for the axe" [italics added] there is a powerful sense that change is incontrovertible.[146]

To return to Priestley, the privileging of the distant past in his work is clear, as is the geological metaphor of successive layers. The success of this metaphor turns on two things. First, that historical continuity is disrupted at certain points. Second, these points at which disruption occurs can be clearly identified; for Priestley they were the industrial revolution and First World War. For D.H. Lawrence the moment is the industrial revolution;

> England my England! But which is *my* England? The Stately Homes of England make good photographs and create the illusion of a connection with the Elizabethans... but smut falls and blacken on the drab stucco, that has long ceased to be golden... As for the cottages of England - there they are - great plasterings of brick dwellings on the hopeless countryside. This is history. One England blots out another. The mines had made the halls wealthy. Now they were blotting them out, as they had already blotted out the cottages. Industrial England blots out the agricultural England. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical.[147]

Here again is the idea of one England erasing another. There is no sense that two England's can exist side by side; the language is of encroachment, effacement and

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[145]Gibbs, P. in Giles, J. and Middleton, T., 1995, *op cit.*, p.33-34.

[146]*Ibid.*, p.34.

[147]Lawrence, D.H., in Leavis, F.R. and Thompson, D., 1933, *Culture and Environment - The Training of Critical Awareness*, Chatto and Windus, London, p.94.

obliteration - precisely the menace that gave comparisons to a door ajar authority. The geological metaphor further emphasised the insidiousness and immutability of change.

In his introduction to Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*, H.J. Massingham employed the geological metaphor, speaking specifically of "three strata of social and economic period, cross-hatched by differences of social degree" which were distinguishable in Thompson's trilogy.[148] "In terms of geological time" wrote Massingham, "the lowest stratum is the old order of rural England surviving rare but intact from a pre-industrial and pre-Enclosure past almost timeless in its continuity".[149] The middle stratum disclosed the "old order impoverished, reduced in status, dispropertied but still clinging to old values, loyalties and domestic stabilities".[150] The top stratum - the most recent - was symbolised by a row of new villas linking Candleford Green with Candleford Town.

It is not necessary for these divisions and layers to demonstrate complete continuity, postulating the same boundaries and divisions. What is important is the prevalence of this way of thinking about England in terms of chunks of time and space, emphasising the use of the past in constructions of Englishness. This construction speaks to the idea of finding England everywhere: the 'real' England could be found wherever the England of the past (or England number one) was still intact - something that the South Country cannot accommodate. In the next chapter I will highlight the paradox that going in search of the England of the past and finding England everywhere precisely contributed to its erasure by the England of the 'present'.

Conclusion

I have shown in this chapter that evoking the past is important in the construction of both the regional identity of the Cotswolds and England. Identifying temporal boundedness represents a conscious 'setting apart' and privileging of older

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[148]Massingham, H.J., 1984, "Introduction", Thompson, F., *Lark Rise to Candleford*, Penguin, p.9. First published in 1939, Massingham's introduction added in 1945.
[149]*Ibid.*, p.9.
[150]*Ibid.*, p.9.

versions of England from contemporary versions. Here I would like to stress that calling England and the Cotswolds 'old' can indicate both continuity and demise - this is the paradox inherent in celebrating the past but simultaneously seeing it as on the edge of being lost forever. Nevertheless the idea of continuity "contrasts with and holds lessons for a changing world".[151] Thus some uses of the past have a didactic function; to both inspire patriotism and sound an alarm for the state of the nation.

In the uses of the past what the memory contrives to forget is as important as what it remembers.[152] As Samuel has argued, memory is dialectically related to historical thought rather than being some kind of negative other to it.[153] He further argues that

> Memory is historically conditioned, changing colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment; that so far from being handed down in the timeless form of tradition it is progressively altered from generation to generation. It is stamped with the ruling passions of its time. Like history, memory is inherently revisionist and never more chameleon than when it appears to stay the same.[154]

Thus it is that continuity with past ages can be imagined so powerfully. The notion of a door ajar and the power of using the past to define and describe the Cotswolds and England rests on issues of continuity and discontinuity. Pastimes, traditions, social formations and culture are continuous until their moment of perceived vulnerability. At this point discontinuity threatens. The condition of discontinuity or dislocation from the past is precisely the concern of those writers who could identify numerous Englands. It is expressed in principally in the notion of being separated from the rural, from seasonal and agricultural life and rhythms which characterise 'Old England' and distinguish it from subsequent Englands.

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[151]Matless, D., 1994, "Doing the English Village", Cloke, P., Doel, M., Matless, D., Phillips, M. and Thrift, N. (eds), *Writing the Rural - Five Cultural Geographies*, Paul Chapman Publishing, p.24.

[152]Samuel, R., 1994, *Theatres of Memory, Volume One: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Verso.

[153]*Ibid.*

[154]*Ibid.*, p.x.

As an interesting post-script to this chapter I wish to return to the work of J. Arthur Gibbs. In an extraordinary passage at the end of *A Cotswold Village* Gibbs imagined the people of the future venerating the closing years of Victoria's reign.

> We are apt to talk of the good old days that are no more, lamenting the customs and country sports that have passed away; but let us not forget that two hundred years hence... our descendants, as they sit round their hearths at Yuletide, may in the same way regret the grand old times when good Victoria - the greatest monarch of all ages was Queen of England.[155]

Here Gibbs is reflecting critically on his own use of the past as a stick with which to beat the present but it is important to realise that this is by no means a sanguine view of the future. People in two hundred years time would reflect on when

> every man, woman and child in the village turned out to see the 'meet' [foxhunt], and the peer and the peasant were for the day on equal footing, bound together by an extraordinary devotion to the chase of that little red rover, which men called the fox - now, alas! extinct, as the mammoth or the bear, owing to barbed wire, and the abolition of the horse; when to such an extent were games and sports a part of our national life that half London flocked to see two elevens of cricket (including a champion 'nine' feet high called Grace) fighting their mimic battle arrayed in white flannels and curiously coloured caps, at a place called Lords, the exact site of which is now, alas! lost in the sea of houses; ...when in the good old days, before electricity and the motor-car caused the finest specimen of the brute creation to become virtually extinct... horse racing for a cup and a small fortune in gold was second to cricket and football in the estimation of all merrie Englanders - the only races now indulged in being those of flying machines to Mars and back twice a day.[156]

Gibbs is as sharply critical of his present and immediate future in this view of two hundred years hence as he was full of praise for Elizabethan times. There is profound disquiet in Gibb's vision and in the following chapter I will examine how such disquiet among many authors was manifest in writing about popular discoveries of rural England.

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[155]Gibbs, J.A., *A Cotswold Village*, Allan Sutton, p.235.

[156]*Ibid.*, p.236.

Chapter Seven

Discovering and Encountering the Cotswolds and England

In the last chapter I suggested that the idea of the door ajar and ideas of continuity and discontinuity rested in part on the perception that popular discoveries of and encounters with the Cotswolds and rural England were threatening the very thing to be discovered. In this penultimate chapter I am going to examine this more fully and argue that 'discovering' the Cotswolds and England was a deeply contested activity fraught with tensions and paradoxes which were themselves informed by ideas of class and culture.

I am taking a more integrated approach in this chapter to show how closely issues of discovering and encountering the Cotswolds were related to similar concerns at the national level. In the first section I will examine the contrast between what I have called 'informed' encounters of the Cotswolds and England with 'uninformed' encounters. This will demonstrate that certain 'ways of seeing' were privileged above others. I will discuss the relationship between the idea of boundedness and discovery in the Cotswolds. I will also suggest that the means of discovery - by car or charabanc - were precisely implicated in debates about the levity or otherwise of these ways of seeing. In the second section I will examine the idea that people could be taught to encounter the countryside in acceptable ways.

How to See the Countryside

In this section I examine the contrasts that were seen to exist between 'informed' and 'uninformed' encounters with the Cotswolds. I use the phrases 'informed' and 'uninformed' to highlight the distinction that was seen to exist between two groups. The first group were those who felt their encounters with the Cotswolds to be intellectually informed; who felt themselves able to appreciate the area, whose grasp of history, the natural sciences, aesthetics, beauty or culture amounted to a noetic equipment with which to appropriate and appreciate the region. They were engaged in what Matless has

called "the art of right living".[1] This first group in part identified and defined a second group who were their antithesis. The second group were seen to be frivolous. Indifferent to the beauty and charm of the area, they were distinguished by their hebetude. Rather than seeking out the 'true' Cotswolds they were drawn to sites which, in the view of the first group, had prostituted themselves to the inane pleasures of the second. This distinction between informed and uninformed encounters is also reflected at the national scale.

Informed Discoveries

Antiquarians, geologists and amateur historians with interests ranging from natural to ecclesiastical subjects, and others with scholarly or philosophical leanings all encountered the Cotswolds in informed ways. The latter used the landscape as a source of thoughtful reflection on aesthetics, beauty, seeing and understanding the countryside. This variety of possible informed encounters in the Cotswolds was reflected in the Youth Hostel Association magazine *Rucksack* which pointed out that "Whether for distant views, for the contour of moor and hill and steep escarpment, for treasure of rare flowers and birds, for antiquarian and historical interest, these hills are sheer delight".[2]

The explorations of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society were part of an intellectual amateur but scholastic tradition. Its work was situated in the broader discourse of scholarly discovery and exploration at home and in the British Empire. The BGAS represented the socialisation and institutionalisation of science - one of its principle reasons for existence was the absence of an archaeological organisation in Gloucestershire. BGAS members also anticipated "the wide interest that it would awaken among the many cultivated residents in the fair country to which they all belonged".[3] The Society's founding members also alluded to its influence in matters of conservation, deploring the "great deal of stupid destruction of the monuments of the

[1]Matless, D., 1995, "'The Art of Right Living' - landscape and citizenship 1918-1939", Pile, S. and Thrift, N. (eds), *Mapping the Subject - Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, Routledge.

[2]Various Hands, 1933, "The Ways of Britain: IV The Severn Sea", *The YHA Rucksack*, Volume 1, Number 4, p54.

past" and the tendency for "time-honoured relics", mounds and remains of archaeological interest to be levelled or obliterated for "the sake of some passing convenience".[4] The inaugural document went on

> The moment the wretched utilitarian spirit which was so opposed to the nobler view which a society such as their own would always advocate, sought to destroy any time honoured object... their society would send some competent person who would remonstrate and that in very emphatic terms, at any acts of vandalism.[5]

Finally the Society hoped to "develop a sensibility to true art, especially in regard to ecclesiastical buildings".[6] This was an agenda which sought to promote a scholarly encounter with the Cotswolds and in so doing encourage higher learning amongst others. The preservationist role is also clear; through scholarly endeavour the true worth of things would be known and they could be preserved against the "wretched utilitarian spirit".

In addition to the BGAS, the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club and many individuals independent of learned societies pursued amateur scholastic work in the Cotswolds. Writing in 1923 J.W. Haines noted that the CNFC was engaged in a wide range of botanical, geological, archaeological, ornithological and entomological work.[7] The Architectural Association took their annual outing in the Cotswolds in 1895 and 1909, publishing an account of the later trip in their Journal.[8] Members of the British Association arrived for their excursion in 1930 and visited churches, abbeys, Chedworth Roman Villa and other sites of antiquarian interest.[9] But aside from these organised visits numerous scholarly guides from the 1850s onwards directed the individual to

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[3]Ducie, T., Deddoe, J. and Hallett, P., 1874, "Proposed - Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeology Society", *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, Volume 1, part 1, p.15.

[4]*Ibid.*, p.15.

[5]*Ibid.*, p.15.

[6]*Ibid.*, p.15.

[7]Haines, J.W., 1923, "Paradise", *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalist's Field Club*, Vol.XXI, part 3.

[8]Searles-Wood, H.D. *et al*, 1909, "The Annual Excursion - Cheltenham and Neighborhood", *Architectural Association Journal*, Vol.XXIV, No.271.

[9]The British Association, 1930, *Handbook for Excursion B: The Cotswolds*, John Wright and Sons Ltd, Bristol.

Gloucestershire's geology, ecclesiastical architecture and local and natural history.[10] *Black's Guide to the County of Gloucestershire*, for instance, published in its sixth edition in 1886, contained general information on the history and geology of the county and a list of gentleman's seats plus a small section for each town which detailed buildings of ecclesiastical and antiquarian interest and some titbits of local history.[11]

Leslie Cohen was convinced that "to understand the Cotswolds it is necessary to have some grasp of its past history, nor is this without interest, for it stretches across the years into dim Pre-Christian ages".[12] This was not difficult to achieve with the availability of books like Arthur Mee's *Gloucestershire - The Glory of the Cotswolds*, an antiquarian A-Z of the county.[13] Algernon Gissing urged "those who care for their landscape" to ransack "the vast stores of local material collected in archaeological and natural history publications" as well as the documents "mouldering away" in parish coffers.[14] But Gissing also outlined another way of seeing.

"For the ordinary observer" Gissing argued,

> these facts are quite useless if they do not suggest something picturesque to the mind. At any rate so far as any educational value is to lie in the study of local scenery, it is plain that this must be imbued with a touch of imaginative pleasure in addition to any merely historical or scientific curiosity.[15]

Gissing is suggesting another way of seeing the countryside which was predicated on ideas of vision, aesthetic principles and a spiritual sense of engaging with nature. It was no less 'informed' than Mee's rather dry antiquarian tome and no less keenly aware of an indifferent 'other' of the asinine tourist. The key to this encounter with the Cotswolds was, for Gissing, familiarity through the seasons. "Of course" he wrote,

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[10]See for instance Anonymous, 1853, *Knight's Tourist's Companion through the land we live in*, London, Nattali and Bond; Winscom, J.A., 1861, *Dear Old England - A Description of our Fatherland*, Publisher unknown.

[11]Anonymous, 1886, *Black's Guide to the County of Gloucestershire*, Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh.

[12]Cohen, L., 1937, "Nor Any Other Wold like Cotswold", *Great Thoughts*, p.99.

[13]Mee, A., 1938, *Gloucestershire - The Glory of the Cotswolds*, Hodder and Stoughton.

[14]Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London and Toronto, p.22.

[15]*Ibid.*, p.23

> you can only really know and love a landscape from familiarity with it in details through all the seasons. From the first celandine and chiffchaff to the last red berry left by the stormcock and fieldfare, the pageant of the year affords numberless delights which mysteriously blend to stir up that singular emotion binding us to the landscape and so familiar to the open air soul.[16]

Clearly a degree of natural history knowledge informs Gissing's account - he can identify various birds without difficulty - but it shapes an encounter with the Cotswolds that has a different degree of imaginative intensity to, for instance, the visit of the British Association. Gissing found his approach most aptly described by Shelley, whom he quoted in his *Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*:

> Away, away from men and towns,
> To the wild wood and the downs,
> To the silent wilderness,
> Where the soul need not repress
> Its music, lest it should not find
> An echo in another's mind,
> While the touch of nature's art
> Harmonises heart to heart.[17]

Gissing felt himself to be bound to the landscape by spiritual ties and he set out self consciously to renew that instinctive bond. "There is at times" he reflected,

> a longing in every soul for a real cloud, a free bird, and a wild flower. Every child is born with it, and none become too old to know that one sunny hour spent with any or all of the three carries a mysterious benediction such as no other relaxation can bestow.[18]

For H.J. Massingham encountering the Cotswolds was similarly a matter of personal consciousness and a unity and intimacy with nature but this was hindered by "the blindness imposed by an individual civilisation, where happiness and the art of living are overlaid by the competitive greeds of the few and by fear of the outer economic

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[16]*Ibid.*, p.23.

[17]Shelley, P.B., "The Invitation", Gissing, A., 1924, *The Footpath Way in Gloucestershire*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London and Toronto, p.202.

[18]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.202.

darkness among the many".[19] He described the process of falling in love with the Cotswolds as one of ever increasing intimacy:

> When you first travel Cotswold, its wolds and vales and streams and villages bring the impact of first love, a lyrical delight. Then follows the middle period, when you begin to understand the lay and structure of the land, to find things where you expect, the period of recognition and more familiarity; and perhaps then you become a little used to what you see. But after that comes the last phase and the last love of all, when intimacy reveals a newness unexpected, freshness unexplored, graces undivulged; and this is the love that is both last and lasts, for its fountains are inexhaustible.[20]

In this state of heightened joy and serenity could Massingham feel himself become a conscious part of nature and even "the very consciousness of nature".[21]

C.E.M. Joad might have placed Massingham in the first of his two classes of nature lovers who desired "to lose themselves in nature... to transcend themselves by fusion with something other than themselves, and they look upon nature as a vast absorbent, a sort of sponge for swabbing of their own individualities".[22] The second group, in which Joad placed himself, went to nature "not to forget but to realise themselves", not to lose themselves in nature but to "affirm and strengthen themselves by absorbing her".[23] In either case a self-conscious engagement with nature was required. The resulting surge of "aesthetic emotion", love and instinctive feeling for nature hinted at a higher level of aesthetic consciousness which Joad believed people would one day attain. As an example he gave "the emotion we feel for the line of a down, or for an elm in August standing solid and solitary in a field against a sunset sky".[24] This description of Joad's aesthetic emotion is similar to H.W. Timperley's "upland mood" (examined in chapter four) which was stimulated by the curves and

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[19]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *Wold Without End*, Cobden Sanderson, p.107.
[20]*Ibid.*, p.261.
[21]*Ibid.*, p.189.
[22]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *The Book of Joad - A Belligerent Autobiography*, Faber and Faber, p.118-119.
[23]*Ibid.*, p.118-119.
[24]*Ibid.*, p.120-121.

intersections of a Cotswold hillside.[25] It is also echoed in Robert Henriques' use of design principles and proportion to describe the visual impact of Cotswold slopes.[26]

It was to aesthetic encounters of England that Vaughan Cornish addressed himself in *The Scenery of England*, published in 1932. He produced a "scientific analysis of the sentiment aroused by the different influences of scenery - visual, temperamental, aesthetic" which amounted to "a philosophical basis for the aesthetics of scenery, built upon the ultimate foundation of our geology and geography".[27] Just as scholarly encounters by antiquarians and natural historians in the Cotswolds had a preservationist aspect, so Cornish's work was in support of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. Cornish's aim "as a citizen and a man of science" was to determine and describe

> the characteristic beauties of English scenery... in the hope and belief that a more general understanding of those things needful to England's beauty will bring help and support to the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and their efforts to secure our heritage of scenery.[28]

This was no small undertaking. It was Thomas Burke's view, for instance, that the English countryside eluded definitions and analysis. "The sentiment of English scenery is not easily expressed" he wrote, "It makes no thrusting call upon the attention... It needs to be looked at through the heart, not the mind. Its sentiment flutters about our comprehension, but never settles within grasp. We perceive it for ourselves but cannot convey it".[29] Such evanescence would not further the cause of the CPRE however. Cornish's analysis was needed to legitimate and justify the work of the Council in scientific terms. This was made clear in the CPRE's programmatic statement in the Forward to *The Scenery of England*:

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[25]Timperley, H.W., 1931, *A Cotswold Book*, London, Jonathan Cape.

[26]Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds*, Vision of England series edited by Williams Ellis, C. and Williams Ellis, A., Paul Elek.

[27]Cornish, V., 1932, *The Scenery of England - A Study of Harmonious Grouping in Town and Country*, Council for the Preservation of Rural England, p.7.

[28]*Ibid.*, p.9.

[29]Burke, T., 1933, *The Beauty of England*, George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd, p.15.

> Our Council is a propaganda body, or rather a combination of societies and individuals who strive to maintain the beauty or rural England, and at the same time to promote its thoughtful and orderly development. We want our work to be founded upon technical knowledge and good sense. We want to be able to demonstrate the value of our country scenery, to argue and explain its inherent beauties, and to justify our efforts for its protection.[30]

I will say more about Cornish's work shortly.

These variously informed encounters with the Cotswolds and England turned on, "what you want to see and what you are capable of seeing", to use Thomas Burke's phrase.[31] Those who, it was felt, did not wish to see and were incapable of doing so were the vilified Other to which the next section turns.

Uninformed Discoveries

Those undertaking what they believed to be informed discoveries of the Cotswolds and England also defined the uninformed Other who, without the benefit of education and knowledge, brought levity to their consumption of the countryside. David Matless has noted that with the expansion of car ownership, bus travel and communal charabanc trips into the countryside between 1918 and 1939 trippers from urban areas were seen to display "conduct unbecoming". Litter, noise, flowerpicking and disobedient bathing contrasted with the behaviour of "the right leisure user".[32] Matless goes on

> the nation was seen to have a behavioural problem. Various stock litter-dropping noise-making figures emerge; thoughtless upper and middle class 'motor-picnickers' not clearing their empties, loud working-class charabancers. Offenders are often labelled 'Cockney', regardless of their precise geographical origin. This cultural figure is picked upon as a grotesque, to be celebrated in its natural urban habitat but labelled out of place in the country.[33]

Visiting the south coast deliberately to collect examples of the worst kind of offences by invading townspeople, Joad noted that on a summers day in the erstwhile peaceful dunes

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[30]Cornish, V., 1932, *op cit.*, p.7-8.

[31]Burke, T., 1933, *op cit.*, p.30.

[32]Matless, D., 1995, *op cit.*, p.94.

of Camber Beach "gramophones and portable wireless sets compete against each other in a horrid cacophony. And all round the coast the same destruction of the elementary amenities of privacy and beauty is going on!"[34]

Implicit in Joad's account is the notion that encountering the countryside alone or in small groups is preferable to a mass invasion of indifferent, undifferentiated town dwellers. This is reflected in Henry Branch's vignette about the male explorer of the Cotswolds:

> A fair blue sky, flecked with clouds and flooding a landscape of hill, pasture, cornland and orchard with the strong actinic light beloved of photographers. A Midland train leaving well to time at thirty-nine minutes past noon. A passenger with a Kodak, and with the open, enquiring mind, undisturbed by mundane considerations, which early lunch and a tolerable cigar engender. A ticket for Beckford, and a brief, pleasant journey, with the change at Aschurch as the only incident. A wayside station, and a path leading - wither?[35]

There is also a definite sense in Gissing's *Footpath Way in Gloucestershire* that solitude engenders a higher appreciation of the countryside. "The general rush begins to defeat its own ends and the poor country is rapidly expiring under our boisterous caresses" he complained.[36]

When Mr. Prune - the hero of Richard Blake Brown's *Mr. Prune on Cotswold* - reached Bourton-on-the-Water on his bike he found that, owing to the sunshine,

> a not at all attractive crowd of cars and two or three motor coaches that had disgorged and unprepossessing medley of humans (presumably from Birmingham or Coventry) who, not wishing to press on so far afield as Weston-Super-Mare, had deigned to regard Bourton as the next best thing.[37]

Destitute of any real plan or intention to explore the Cotswolds, the crowds at Bourton were, in Prune's view, indulging in banal gratification. He resolved to return to Bourton

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[33]*Ibid.*, p.95.

[34]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.192.

[35]Branch, H., 1907, *Cotswold and Vale: or glimpses of past and present in Gloucestershire*, Cheltenham, Norman Sawyer and Co, St. George's Hall, p.163.

[36]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.202.

[37]Blake Brown, R., 1938, *Mr. Prune on Cotswold*, London, Martin Secker, p.25.

"on a day more favourable to the satisfying of his tastes".[38] Robert Henriques noticed that during every summer weekend "cars and charabancs rolling from Birmingham and Kidderminster park themselves, nose to tail, on both sides of the street. The occupants spill out to paddle in the stream and to eat lunch. Two or three scarlet vans arrive to sell ice-cream on a reserved pitch, and the queues from the vans to the river stretch across the bridges".[39] He resented having to elbow and twist his way through crowds enjoying the inane delights of the model village and riverside booths, side-shows, skittles and treasure-hunts.

The class tension is clear in these encounters of the uninformed by the informed. Robert Henriques and Mr. Prune, alone on his bike, separately encounter the crowds who, they assume, must be from one of the large industrial cities of the Midlands - an assumption arrived at purely on the basis of their behaviour. Prune noted that these "unprepossessing humans" were apparently incapable of even pressing on to their original destination, and so urgent was their desire for superficial pleasures that even Bourton provided a viable alternative to Weston-Super-Mare. Prune was dismayed at this disruption of his superior solitary pleasure by the crowds. Henriques, on the other hand, was at pains to show that he was not attacking "proletarian delights" but making an argument about the place of those delights.

For Henriques there were two basic positions; either the people were allowed to play "in herds and as noisily as they like" all over the Cotswolds or they must come singly and in couples to the hills and valleys, in search of quietness, solitude and rest.[40] "The Cotswolds must either be a pleasure park, or a human sanctuary as inviolable as a bird sanctuary or a game sanctuary" he wrote, "But the Cotswolds cannot be both".[41] Here precisely is the tension between informed and uninformed discoveries expressed in the incompatibility between the two encounters.

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[38]*Ibid.*, p.25.
[39]Henriques, R., 1950, *op cit.*, p.69.
[40]*Ibid.*, p.70.
[41]*Ibid.*, p.70.

Dislike of crowds and their pursuit of pleasure informs Joad's account of "The Incomprehensible Habits of Those Visiting Resorts" in his *Book of Joad.* "I once went to Southend to observe and participate in the enjoyments which the most advanced civilisation that the world has seen offers to the bulk of its members" he began anecdotally, and went on:

> Getting out of the train I at once found myself a member of a great crowd which, streaming out of the station, moved slowly forward in a surging mass until we reached the sea-front. There with one accord we turned to the left and settled ourselves in the half-mile between a pier and some gasometers. This was one of the most unsavoury spots that could be well imagined, squalid and dingy, swarming with noisy beach photographers, winklesellers, vendors of rock and postcards. Why we stayed there none of us knew; every other part of the beach, either in the direction of Thorpe Bay and Shoeburyness or Westcliffe and Leigh, was quieter and pleasanter and prettier, but we settled ourselves down in a solid mass in this one half-mile, leaving it only to patronise on the dreary 'amusement palaces' with which Southend is studded.[42]

The mass of day-trippers to Southend - like their counterparts in the Cotswolds - had demonstrated an unforgivable lack of discernment, individuality or curiosity in their surroundings. What is implicit in Joad's account is the idea that these trippers *did not know any better.* As John Lowerson has put it "how sharp had become the notion that the townsman, the weekender, was not necessarily the angel of culture".[43] The problem, in Joad's view, was dominance of machines in society, the operation of which was making men uniform and soulless.

Much the same critique of indifference to beauty and nature lies in Massingham's account of a north Cotswold farmer who inherited a beautiful woodland full of wild flowers. He threw the wood open to "all who chose to wander through it and pick [the flowers] and, if children they be, he will add coppers to the fair plunder as he goes his rounds on his nag". But the farmer's generosity was stretched by the disregard of urban visitors. "What galled [the farmer]" wrote Massingham,

> were the human sparrows from the Midland towns who rooted up his bluebells and stripped his hazels of their branches. He posted notices on the borders of the

[42]Joad, C.E.M., *op cit.*, p.195.

[43]Lowerson, J., 1980, "Battles for the Countryside", Gloversmith, F. (ed), *Class, Culture and Social Change - A New View of the 1930s*, Harvester Press, Sussex, p.261.

> wood, but country weekenders are no respecters of the rights of the bluebells and primroses to live. They went on sacking the wood. So he armed himself with a horsewhip on his rounds and, when he met a party of this industrial fry loaded with the spoils of their rape, he cracked his crop and drove them off. But it takes something more than brusquerie to put town-parties off their pillage. So the farmer took his gun and he shot the tyres of these cits [sic] while they were away grubbing and smashing.[44]

The farmer was called before the bench and told the magistrate that his wood was free to all the world but that he would not stand for the visitors "making hell out of it". The magistrate refused to convict him. "Here" Massingham concluded, "was a man seeking to make sure that the world of facts was less preposterously unlike the world of values".[45] The language in this account is of invasion and plundering, disregard and carelessness. The weekenders demonstrated a hedonistic insistence upon enjoying themselves with the example of uprooting the flowers is telling in this respect. For the informed traveller on the Cotswolds delight would have lain in identifying the flower and seeing it in its natural environment whereas the "human sparrow" from the Midlands enjoyed picking for picking's sake and was indifferent to the beauty or interest to be gained. S.P.B. Mais illustrated his pen portrait of the visitor from the town in a similar way. These people paid lip-service to natural beauty "yet leave their litter strewn among the woods, completely unconscious of the evil that they have left as a legacy. They uproot all the wild flowers and leave the woods as barren as a dunghill".[46]

Thus the construction and representation of a group of uniformed visitors engaging in frivolous pleasures was made in part by reference to stories of decadent tourists besporting themselves in the Cotswolds. But this representation was further reinforced through stories of how some beautiful Cotswold villages were being systematically altered to accommodate the tourist whose only interest was to receive a superficial 'dose' of the Cotswolds in an easily digestible gobbet. Thus, as I have shown, in the Cotswolds (as in England generally) the invasion of the untutored townsman (and woman) was realised in part through lurid tales of fox-trotting on the

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[44]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.145-146.

[45]*Ibid.*, p.145-146.

[46]Mais, S.P.B., 1938, "The Plain Man Looks at England", Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Readers' Union by arrangement with J. Dent and Sons, Ltd., p.218.

grass and paddling in streams but also through the 'prostitution' of towns like Bourton on the Water and - in particular - Broadway.

"If there is anything hateful to me on Cotswold, it is Broadway" wrote H.J. Massingham in *Wold Without End*, adding damningly "technically speaking it is not Cotswold at all, being planted at the bottom of Fish Hill, well within the Vale of Evesham".[47] As a result Broadway was "anxious to arrogate to itself the honours of Cotswold". "The whole village now reeks of 'ye old'" Massingham sneered, "and in a parasite of self-advertisement clamours its olde sovreigntie to the native citizens of Jacksonville, who disgorges no bagatelle of his ill-gotten gains within the ancient hostelries".[48] It was nothing less than the "nucleus of corruption for the countryside".[49] "What is the thought in the mind of a native who advertises the auncientrie [sic] of his home by an up-to-dateness of method, sign and symbol that destroys it?" Massingham wondered rhetorically. "Plainly money" was the answer.

> He makes a good thing out of having his cake and eating it. So a 'ye olde' sign swings next door to a hoarding fanfaring quack dentifrice. The visitor can enjoy the 'old-world atmosphere' with a good vintage and expensive lunch inside him and every modern convenience about him. In Broadway you can sing Ancient and Modern at the same time, embracing two worlds and false to both. And Mr. Facing Both Ways Broadway prospers, and Lot's wife makes a good investment of going forward and looking back. What does it matter if she be turned into a pillar of salt without heart or sensibility or reality of being any more? It pays... I would rather be a diddecoy[50] with no home at all than a native of Broadway.[51]

Massingham was by no means alone in his emphatic opinion of Broadway. Priestley also noticed that it was "at Ye Olde game" and drove straight through, commenting that "it was loud with bright young people who had just arrived from the town and *The Tatler* in gamboge and vermilion sports cars".[52]

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[47]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.64.
[48]*Ibid.*, p.64.
[49]*Ibid.*, p.211.
[50]Diddecoy - gypsy or itinerant tinker.
[51]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.211.
[52]Priestley, J.B., 1984, *English Journey*, William Heinemann Ltd., p.48. First published 1934.

Most vitriolic of all, perhaps, was John Moore, who spared nothing to heap his account of Broadway with derision. "In its way Broadway is perfect" he began,

> but so, after all are most successful harlots... Who shall blame Broadway... for marketing its beauty on a strictly commercial basis? Unfortunately Broadway does not confine itself to doing this. It is like the sort of harlot who not only charges you an exorbitant fee but seizes the opportunity of picking your pockets as well.[53]

Moore toyed with the idea of writing out a notice in capital letters and carrying it through Broadway attached to a sandwich board. The notice would read

> I AM NOT AN AMERICAN OR A RICH IDIOT. I AM NOT INTERESTED IN SHAM ANTIQUES. I DO NOT REQUIRE ANY OF THOSE OLD OAK CHESTS WHICH YOU MAKE SO INGENIOUSLY. I ABOMINATE ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF ARTS AND CRAFTS. I AM NOT A FOLD DANCER NOR A MORRIS DANCER NOR A PLAYER UPON ANY KIND OF OBSOLETE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT. PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO SELL ME ANY HAND-WOVEN SCARVES. AND I DON'T WANT ANYTHING MADE OF RAFFIA EITHER. NOR DO I WISH TO SIT ON A CHAIR WHICH WAS SAT ON BY QUEEN ELISABETH OR TO SLEEP IN A BED WHICH WAS SLEPT IN BY KING CHARLES. ALL I WANT IS A PUB WITH A BAR WHERE I CAN BUY HALF A PINT OF DECENT BITTER FOR FOUR-PENCE AND TALK WITH HONEST MEN, IF THERE ARE ANY LEFT IN BROADWAY.[54]

Moore roared on that Broadway was simply after the visitor's money by selling antiques of dubious quality or by simply overcharging the visitor for everything they wanted to buy. "I wonder if the whole place contains more than a dozen people who do not, directly or indirectly, batten on tourists for a living and feed themselves fat out of the profits made out of American innocents and English fools" he fumed.[55]

There was some defence of Broadway, in Ward Lock's *Guide to the Cotswolds*, for instance. "It is the fashion among Cotswold-lovers to look askance at Broadway because of the crowds who pour into it every fine weekend and of the arrangements that have been made to meet their needs" began the anonymous author of this account, and

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[53]Moore, J., 1937, *The Cotswolds*, Chapman Hall Ltd., p.90.
[54]*Ibid.*, p.90.
[55]Moore, J., 1937, *op cit.*, p.93.

continued "Such intolerant criticism, however, does the village a grace injustice".[56] But even this defence was double edged, urging the discerning visitor to "See [Broadway] on a sunny day before the crowds have begun to arrive, or at evening when the last coach has departed, and there is the opportunity to make an unhindered and leisurely survey".[57] The author added cuttingly "Broadway [is] a pleasant place which has the misfortune to be popular".[58]

Other villages came in for similar criticism. Travelling to Burford and Bourton-on-the-Water J.B. Priestley was dismayed to find both of these villages changed. Burford looked "rather more self-conscious than it used to, as if too many people had been buying picture postcards in it" while Bourton-on-the-Water was similarly becoming "very conscious of itself" and had been disfigured by "poor buildings".[59] Massingham was characteristically uncompromising on the subject of Bourton-on-the-Water. "Bourton has been called the Venice of the Cotswolds, but this is obviously a misreading for the Wigan of the Cotswolds" he wrote scathingly.[60] John Moore imagined Bourton lying in wait for visitors in the summer and in the winter counting its takings and looking smug, "waiting for the next batch of visitors who will come, like the swallows, with the sun".[61] Robert Henriques was as ruthless, calling the village "as vile an example of rustic prostitution as any charabanc could seek".[62]

Changes to village life were remarked on by C.E.M. Joad in a broader context. He noticed that when tourists - and particularly motorists - reached a village it was miraculously and pitifully transformed;

> The country pub becomes a second-rate motoring hotel, the village street a roaring thoroughfare, the village shop an emporium for picture postcards.

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[56]Anonymous, c.1947, *Guide to the Cotswolds with Special Sections on Natural Life and Antiquities by H.J. Massingham and Architecture by Clough Williams Ellis*, Ward Lock and Co. Ltd., p.101.
[57]*Ibid.*, p.101.
[58]*Ibid.*, p.102.
[59]Priestley, J.B., 1984, *English Journey*, William Heinemann Ltd., p.39. First published 1934.
[60]Massingham, H.J., 1941-42, *Cotswold Country - A Survey of Limestone England from the Dorset Coast to Lincolnshire*, B.T. Batsford, p.80. First published 1937.
[61]Moore, J., *op cit.*, p.57.
[62]Henriques, R., *op cit.*, p.69.

> Garages and teashops spring up like mushrooms, and on every side the country breaks out into the familiar red rash [of bungalows].[63]

The village had stopped being beautiful as soon as it became a 'beauty-spot'. "It will be said of this nation" wrote Joad, "that it found England a land of beauty and left it a land of 'beauty-spots'".[64] The motorist (the object of Joad's derision in this case) was nothing less than a modern Midas, transforming everything he touched in to brass and tin.

Boundedness and Discovery

The idea of boundendess gave the discovery of the Cotswolds extra meaning and in some cases poignancy. The anonymous author of the article "The Passing of Cotswold Architecture" argued that the railway and the motor car were making even the remote parts of the Cotswolds popular. Broadway in particular was "paying the penalty of new won fame extending to both sides of the Atlantic, and is a melancholy example of the way in which the attending prosperity may rapidly destroy the beauty on which the fame is depended".[65] The author identified three stages in "this rake's progress";

> First the plutocrat from afar swoops down on the village, strings together a farmhouse, three cottages, and a smithy with stately loggias, adds a servant's hall, a boudoir, and two or three bathrooms, turns a barn into a ball room with a glass cupola, furnishes this compound palace from Wardour Street, and leaves it in charge of plush breeched flunkies while he scorches to the Riviera in his motor-car.[66]

In the second stage a villager who wishes to make his fortune digs up his lovely flowery front garden and replaces it with a "smart shop, blotting out the little home whose lichened roof peeps ruefully over a yawning gulf of plate glass garnished with flaming advertisements in yard high lettering". Finally

> when a villager has waxed rich it occurs to him one fine morning that leaded panes and stone mullions, tall gables and massive chimney-stacks are sadly out

[63]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.204.
[64]*Ibid.*, p.204.
[65]Anonymous, 1910, "The Passing of Cotswold Architecture", *The Builder*, May 21, 1910, p.586.
[66]*Ibid.*, p.586.

> of date. Straightaway he tears them down, and proudly sets in their place a neat box of red or yellow brick with a purple lid wherein to end his days in smug contentment.[67]

Age and beauty are destroyed by crassness. For the anonymous author this example illustrated precisely the problem of those "whose skin-deep culture is just sufficient to give them an inkling of the beauty enshrined in the work of past ages" but does not enable them to "analyse its charm or to realise how easily it may be marred by unintelligent interference".[68]

In a paper delivered to a general meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in June 1914 A.C. Benson voiced similar disquiet. He lamented that the Cotswolds "are discovered, as they say, with a vengeance"[69] and he went on

> There is a secluded little combe, which I found some fifteen years ago, on a warm soft spring morning; up the steep road I went, into the green folds of the little valley, and the high hanging woods winding steeply into the hill. There was a church, with a sombre manor house close by, a mere homestead evidently, with all the pleasant litter of byre and poultry yard close about the house, which held up its gables and chimneys over a plumb orchard. Close behind this was an old fifteenth century Rectory half buried in laurels. It looked as if time had gone to sleep there... The unselfconscious homely life of the place... fixed it in my mind as a type of the perfectly beautiful places of the earth with its own dumb appropriate life proceeding unregarded and undisturbed.[70]

But to the "secluded combe" came change. "What did I find there a month ago?" asked Benson, "A rich man, of exuberant taste no doubt, had discovered it too". The new arrival had built a new road, a new and unsightly wing on the house, a new garden, kennels, motor-houses and barns of corrugated iron. "An ineffable shabbiness, a sense of disgrace seems to have fallen on the old cottages which still lurk among the ragged and mud-stained slopes" noted Benson querulously, "It seems to me curious that if one is attracted to such a spot by its unique charm of seclusion and homeliness, one should not wish to just slip unobserved into the life of the pace, and try to fall in with the secret of

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[67]*Ibid.*, p.586-587.

[68]*Ibid.*, p.586.

[69]Benson, A.C., "The Beauty of Age", Powys, A., *The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings Thirty Seventh Annual Report of the Committee*, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, London, p.56.

[70]*Ibid.*, p.56.

the place".[71] Here is the clue to Benson's rancour. If only the new discoverer had had the proper sensibilities, as Benson had, then he would have perceived the charm of the place and not spoiled it. Benson is drawing a contrast between his own discovery which respected the seclusion and remoteness of the little combe and which was magnanimous and above all *informed*, with that of the wealthy industrialist whose discovery was a violation for selfish ends.

Boundedness and discovery also had a class dimension which relates back to the idea of uninformed encounters with the countryside. Mark Liniado has argued that the consequences of urban sprawl and working class countryside visiting were focal points for social anxieties. The process of constructing and maintaining a symbolic and physical boundary ensured that the civilised countryside was not tainted by the chaos of the city. Liniado points out that the "threat of the boundaries being blurred between the country and the city was also a threat of class boundaries disintegrating, with uneducated, working-class townspeople disrespecting the middle-class privileged enjoyment of the countryside".[72] However, boundaries of all kinds were removed by increased mobility and transport innovation. It is to the construction of a moral geography of speed that the next section turns.

Speed and Discovery

Fundamentally tied up with issues of how to see and encounter the countryside was the question of speed at which that encounter took place. Speed was thus given a moral dimension. One of the great stupidities of contemporary society, according to C.E.M. Joad, was the worship of speed.[73] Writing in 1933 Thomas Burke commented that there were many ways of seeing England, but the person who wanted to know all the variety of English scenery must go on a tour. "Not hurriedly though" warned Burke,

> don't try to get all England into your eye and mind in seven days. Do it casually, in a number of short tours. Or do the round and across England tour

[71] *Ibid.*, p.57.
[72] Liniado, M., 1996, *Car Culture and Countryside Change*, The National Trust, p.39.
[73] Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.127.

> first, and then select those districts which appeal to you for further and more leisured exploration.[74]

In contrast to this the author identified only as B.D., writing in *Country Life* in 1937, recalled that his or her announcement to the family of a sightseeing trip in the Cotswolds was greeted with the retort that he or she was not a good sightseer. "Not a good sightseer" protested B.D., "Well, at the end of three days we have seen - very roughly - two cathedrals, six churches, two great houses, one Roman villa, three sets of ancient stones, and almost innumerable villages of lovely greyness".[75] It is difficult to know how far B.D.'s tongue was lodged in his or her cheek, but the point is clear. The quality of the tour depended partly on 'the capacity to see' but also crucially on the speed at which the encounter with rural England took place. The capacity to see and the speed at which seeing took place were further related: the need to zoom through countryside seemed to indicate to many a wilful refusal to engage with the countryside.

The anonymous author of the introduction to Ward Lock's Guide to the Cotswolds noted that

> the Cotswolds are open to all, but they will not reveal themselves to those who cannot resist the temptation to race along such stretches as the Five Mile Drive. The district is very like a lovely old book, the message of which can only be gleaned by a careful study of each page; to flip the pages over rapidly - which is the equivalent of speeding along Five Mile Drive - is to disregard wilfully scenes which have no match in Britain, possibly in the world.[76]

Thus speeding through the Cotswolds indicated a superficial approach to beauty and a lack of earnest engagement by the tourist. There was, then, a moral dimension to seeing the countryside that was precisely tied to issues of speed and willingness to encounter the countryside on an acceptable intellectual or spiritual level.

Methods of exploring the countryside and speeds at which this could be done increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the invention and

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[74]Burke, T., 1933, *op cit.*, p.30.

[75]B.D., 1937, "A Casual Commentary - Sightseeing in the Cotswolds", *Country Life*, September 11th, 1937, p.265.

[76]Anonymous, c.1947, *op cit.*, p.10.

diffusion of the motor car and other motorised forms of transport such as the charabanc.[77] These developments were evident, for instance, in the work of James John Hissey who was touring in a Phaeton in 1889 and a Dog Cart in 1891 but had progressed to a car by 1908.[78] Liniado has argued that the Edwardian period saw a deep ambivalence and fear of speed centred on the motorcar. He notes that "the tensions at the time centred around speed and the threat of cars destroying the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. There were polarised debates between anti-motorists seeking refuge from speed and motorists revelling in it".[79] He further argues that, by the interwar period, "ambivalent experiences of car-based mobility had become taken for granted".[80] I think this is to gloss over the profoundly oppugnant views of motor-based transport (buses as well as cars) that persisted through the interwar years and around which a moral geography of speed was constructed. If haste was considered morally repugnant, the corollary was that a slow, considered, lingering encounter with the countryside was commended. In this section I will consider the latter before examining the former.

Walking

David Matless notes that walking in the interwar years represented "a physical and spiritual escape from the city, a morally beneficial leisure taking the working class out of the pub and cinema. This was a moral practice for all sides".[81] Only when he stopped walking everywhere did W.H. Hudson realise that walking connected him to the earth. "Walking made us more intimate with the people we met and stayed with" he reflected.[82] Louise Imogen Guiney saw the Cotswolds as "the hall marked property of the horseman and the pedestrian" because there was simply no other reasonable way to

[77]Liniado, M., 1996, *op cit.*

[78]Hissey, J.J., 1889, *A Tour in a Phaeton through the Eastern Counties*, Richard Bentley and Son, London; Hissey, J.J., 1891, *Across England in a Dog Cart*, Richard Bentley and Son, London; J.J. Hissey, 1908, *An English Holiday with Car and Camera*, Richard Bentley and Son, London.

[79]Liniado, M., 1996, *op cit.*, p.4.

[80]*Ibid.*, p.5.

[81]Matless, D., 1995, *op cit.*, p.98.

[82]Hudson, W.H., 1982, *Afoot in England*, Oxford University Press, p.25. First Published in 1909.

get onto the uplands.[83] In both these accounts walking is seen to allow an intimacy with people and landscape that cannot be achieved through other forms of transport. It encourages a considered, informed discovery of the countryside to take place.

Joad was himself a keen walker and was encouraged by the growth of walking as a pastime and as a means of learning about beauty. In spite of his diatribes against the vapid masses he was convinced of the importance of the "townsman's discovery of the country" to contemporary civilisation. "It is not only because the life of the town dweller starved of beauty derives the nourishment it needs from nature", he wrote, nor

> that the country is the most potent liberator from man's modern enslavement to gadgets and machines, that country sights and sounds are the best cures for the neuroses of the mind, as fresh air and exercise are the saving antidotes against ailments of the body, that freedom, physical movement, and the stimulating self-help of open-air life are the best aids to jolly companionship... it is, in the last resort, because the capacity to enjoy natural loveliness, to delight in earth and water and sun and air, is one of the final tests by which the value of a man's life is to be judged.[84]

There is a strong emphasis here on involvement in the countryside through the body and physical movement. In the full development of the personality, argued Joad, the body as well as the mind must play its part.[85] This is demonstrated as well in J.M. Tucker's 1936 painting *Hiking* (figure four), set in Avening near Stroud in the Cotswolds. David Matless has argued that this painting

> catches the ethos of composed English movement. Three young women walk in the landscape. Kitted out for freedom with packs, shorts and accessories, their central enabling document is the map. Moving over the country, from one part of the national survey to another, finding localities within the national grid, coming upon things over hills, fixing their place by the symbol for a church with a tower, taking refreshment in the village-in-the-valley and striding to the ridges, these are women fit for their purpose of discovery. Sun shines on the map, indeed the scene's light almost beams from the map, casting its language over the country.[86]

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[83]Guiney, L.I., 1913, "Some Account of Arcady", *Blackwood's Magazine*, No. MCLXXIV, August 1913, p.267.

[84]Joad, C.E.M., 1938, "The People's Claim", Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Readers' Union by arrangement with J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, p.68.

[85]*Ibid.*, p.65.

[86]Matless, D., 1995, *op cit.*, p.105.

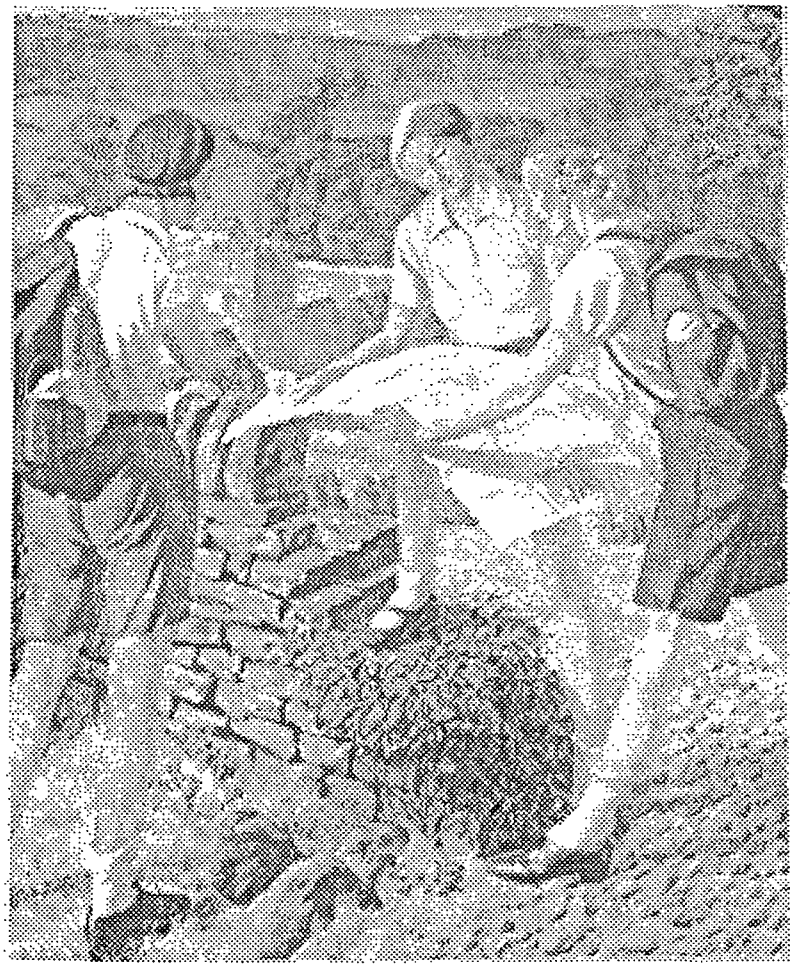

Figure Four: "Hiking" by J.M. Tucker.

This healthy English pursuit is, in Tucker's painting, being undertaken in the quintessentially English landscape of the Cotswolds. Recalcitrant tourists, their litter and noise, their charabanc or car are all absent and the girls are enjoying an undisturbed encounter with the countryside. The high ground from which they appropriate the landscape is both moral and intellectual.

Car

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section contrasting feelings of fear, excitement and ambivalence surrounded motor-car travel in the Edwardian era. On one hand, the car seemed to represent all that was vile in modern life; speed, noise and disregard for the countryside. On the other hand the car was capable of transforming the landscape and opening up inaccessible areas. In 1930 Alison Murray expressed relief that rail services in the Cotswolds were too limited to bring large numbers on "cheap trips". Rather the region was ideal for "the pedestrian, the rambler, the cyclists and the owner of a small car".[87] She qualified this by adding that the area was suitable for "for the holiday maker and the beauty lover who is not a speed fiend and who has time and the leisured spirit to enjoy the delights of the Cotswolds unhurried".[88] But this acceptance of the motor car when used 'properly' was not universal.

In 1905 Henry Branch pointedly warned the "globe-scouring motorist" to avoid the Cotswold for, although the roads were good, the area was "infinitely beneath the notice of the traveller whose only object in transporting himself from one point of the earth's surface to another is to do so in the shortest possible time."[89] Moreover, the Cotswolds were unsuitable for motor tours because the charm of the place lay "in the difficulties of the way". "What real lover of highways and byways in a strange country would be content to forgo every chance of taking the wrong turning and losing his way?" asked Evans, and continued "If space is to be annihilated, the joys of Cotswold wayfaring are gone forever, and the only chance the motorist has of getting any profit out of it all is to arrange for a good solid breakdown every six miles".[90]

In contrast to Evans, James John Hissey was attracted to the "wilderness of lanes" in his motor car.[91] But Hissey was at pains to show that he was not zooming

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[87]Murray, A., 1930, *The Cotswolds*, Crypt House Pocket Series published by the British Publishing Co. Ltd, Crypt House Press, Gloucester and London. p.17.
[88]*Ibid.*, p.17.
[89]Evans, H.A., 1905, *Highways and Byways in Oxford and the Cotswolds* Macmillan and Co. Ltd., p.314.
[90]*Ibid.*, p.315.
[91]Hissey, J.J., 1913, *A Leisurely Tour in England*, Macmillan and Co. Limited, London, p.307.

around in his car and defended himself in both *An English Holiday with Car and Camera* and *A Leisurely Tour Through England.* In the former he reflected on the opinion that "motorists rush through the country seeing nothing, eager only to conquer distances" but argued that there are "motorists and motorists" and that he would meander around exactly as if he were in a horse and cart. In *A Leisurely Tour Through England* he mounted an even stouter defence. "Though I went by car" he wrote,

> I went leisurely, stopping often by the way, for full well I realise the reward of loitering, and, as all wise wayfarers can testify, there is such a thing as profitably loitering, and a joy with it... With a car... you can control the pace, and can stop at your pleasure; it is an excellent servant, and in truth a bad master.[92]

Thus Hissey exonerated himself by explaining his responsible use of his vehicle. Nevertheless he was forced to admit sheepishly that preaching and practising were not always the same thing when he was succumbed to the power of his car on a Cotswold road;

> Then the spirit of speed took possession of us, the fascination and the frenzy of speed for speed's sake; the rush through the air, mocking the bird in its flight - we even raced a bird that flew alongside, and we won. We had escaped from the fetters that bind man to earth; we were intoxicated with a new-born sense of splendid freedom; without exertion or effort we lightly skimmed the ground; we rode on the wind as it were! The motor car, that marvel of iron and steel, that wonderful triumph of mind over matter, with the beat of its pistons and the whirl of it gears, has conquered the ancient burden of distance, has levelled the hills, and won the horizon! We were rushing into infinity; 'distances, changes, surprises' greeted us in rapid succession as we sped along over the wild, sweeping wolds, and the wind that smote us now was mostly of our own making. Speed is a glorious thing when you can indulge in it without the risk of hurt or annoyance to a living soul; it is a tonic for mind and body, it braces the nerves, set the blood tingling through one's veins, and sweeps the gathered cobwebs from the brain.[93]

Hissey revelled in the transformative power of his car which has rendered familiar landscapes unfamiliar and exciting. J.B. Priestley was similarly moved to remark that swift motion across a countryside did not necessarily take away all appreciation of its charm. "There is a certain kind of pleasant but dullish, rolling country, not very

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[92] *Ibid.*, p.vii.

[93] *Ibid.*, p.337-338.

attractive to the walker or the slow traveller, that becomes alive if you go quickly across it, for it is turned into a kind of sculptured landscape" he insisted.[94] Priestley speculated that this might even constitute an entirely new aesthetic experience. Certainly Hissey was transfixed. He was fortified and invigorated in a way that he never was in his more pedestrian explorations and his abandon contrasted with his intention to explore the Cotswolds slowly and in depth. However, neither his sheepish apology for succumbing to speed nor his justification for using the car in the first place could win any approval from critics of motor-car travel in the Cotswolds.

Louise Imogen Guiney complained bitterly in 1913 about 'discoverers' just like Hissey. "Alas!" she lamented, "The motor-car, as we all know, is busy, the world over, in taking away the baptismal innocence of remote places. The Cotswolds are even now on the verge of becoming a petted part of the modern world".[95] It is perhaps ironic that only a few years earlier Hissey had light-heartedly written

> the sole difficulty that suggested itself to me was to find fresh roads to traverse and taverns new wherein to take our ease, for we had already explored a goodly proportion of our own country, and have even jokingly remarked that, at some not distant date, it would be needful to have England enlarged in order to provide us with new ground to travel over![96]

Algernon Gissing was phlegmatic in the face of increased motor traffic in the Cotswolds. "It is no good grumbling about the desecration of our quiet roads by the noise and dirt of alien traffic" he wrote stoically, "We must make the best of it, and slink as far as possible into impractical by-ways if we want to study or enjoy the last relics of our wild or picturesque life".[97] But even on the by-ways "unnatural smells and uproar" had driven flora and fauna from hedgerows.[98] The very object of scholarly enquiry for Gissing and others with leanings towards natural history was destroyed by the motor car.

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[94]Priestley, J.B., *op cit.*, p.3.

[95]Guiney, L.I., 1913, "Some Account of Arcady", *Blackwood's Magazine*, No. MCLXXIV, August 1913, p.274.

[96]Hissey, J.J., 1908, *op cit.*, p.6.

[97]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.110.

[98]Gissing, A., 1924, *op cit.*, p.110.

H.J. Massingham was in some respects relieved to see motorists speeding along the high 'ridgeways' across the uplands of the Cotswolds for whilst they were on the main roads the by-ways remained relatively deserted. Wondering why they were never tempted to turn off onto the minor roads Massingham found the answer in the motorists' eyes as they passed. "They look neither to the right hand not to the left" he noted, "they sit and spin onwards, each like his fellow in the next car".[99] With grim satisfaction he concluded "Thus, these remote arcana remain inviolate and that is why Cotswold, though a name in all men's mouths, and easily accessible from Wales, Birmingham, Oxford, Banbury and Stratford, continues, except to her deeper lovers, undivulged".[100] Yet elsewhere the side-roads were the objective of the motorist who wished to get away from other motorists. Joad noted that to walk on side-roads was to invite "constant harrying" from motorists who assumed that "it is the business of everybody and everything to give way to him".[101] Having invaded the by-roads they behaved inappropriately; "picnicking in the shadow of their cars, inhaling oil and petrol and extracting music from their machines".[102] It was most galling for Joad that motor cars should interrupt his enjoyment of the countryside.

Joad was adroit at squeezing maximum rhetorical impact from an anecdote and his encounter with the motoring middle classes began with the most eloquent account of his summer walk; the balmy breezes, the mild evening, the air a benediction. Suddenly he became aware of a noise "like the buzzing of a swarm of angry bees, but more explosive and less regular, as though a regiment of soldiers had begun to suffer simultaneously from flatulence of a herd of swine had begun to belch in ragged unison".[103] Mounting a rise Joad saw the road.

> The road is covered with cars. Bonnet to tail they stretch continuously in an unending procession. From time to time the cars break wind irritably in on another's faces. The procession moves, now faster now slower, and every now and then two cars in it change places; but always it goes on. Above it there hangs a murky blue haze. The faces of the motorists are strained and angry;

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[99]Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.163.
[100]*Ibid.*, p.163-164.
[101]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.198.
[102]Joad, C.E.M., 1938, *op cit.*, p.73.
[103]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.197.

> upon them is an air of tense expectancy, they glower at one another. From the country they are completely cut off, they cannot see its sights, hear its sounds, smell its smells, or enjoy its silence. They are hemmed in by other motorists and - even if they were alone, they are in no frame of mind for aesthetic enjoyment.[104]

What is important here is the way in which the motorists were shown to be cut off from their aesthetic sensibilities by *the way they chose to encounter the countryside* - in their cars.[105] Further, their boorish behaviour impinges on Joad's enjoyment too. As the traffic stops at a junction

> there was a great bellowing and hooting on the part of cars trying to get the advantage of each other; and directly they were released, they all began with one accord to bellow and shriek and scream at one another, like a pack of fiends released from the nethermost pit. The noise of all this was appalling; it spread for nearly a mile on each side of the road.[106]

This, Joad remarked scornfully, was how "the motoring classes enjoy a summer's evening in the country. And the habits of the motoring classes constitute an ideal of 'enjoyment' for nine Englishmen out of ten".[107]

Harry Batsford was similarly critical of those who sped through the countryside. He argued that the infinite variety of the English landscape would not be accessible to those who boasted "'Yes, my boy, we averaged forty for the whole day, including stops. Some hustle for these roads, quite a giddy blind, I can tell you'...".[108] The car was excellent for rambling runs if kept strictly in subjection but was not adaptable to close-up scenic exploration.[109] Embedded in this and other arguments about the speed at which

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[104]*Ibid.*, p.197-198.

[105]This denied that there could be a 'gray area' where informed individuals set out to encounter the countryside in their cars. H.J. Massingham, for instance, must surely have used his car to cover the distances that he did - particularly in the winter when the hours of daylight would have restricted his walking time. In *Wold Without End* he wrote "Its roads are mazy, perpetually winding in and out of one another, while the one you happen to be following is as indeterminate in direction as a hen crossing it. Twice I returned to the point whence I had started, like a stranger lost in the forest, and for twenty miles of inconsequent wandering up and down the twisted hill shoulders, I never met a single car. It was pleasant enough, though the roads were like moist sticking plasters". This passage suggests that he was using a car himself. Massingham, H.J., 1932, *op cit.*, p.49.

[106]Joad, C.E.M., 1935, *op cit.*, p.198.

[107]*Ibid.*, p.198.

[108]Batsford, H., 1940, *How to See the Countryside*, B.T. Batsford, p.14.

[109]*Ibid.*, p.54.

the countryside should be seen is a criticism of modern forms of transport shrinking time, space and above all erasing the differences between regions by collapsing space.

In the first part of this chapter I have argued that those who undertook informed encounters of rural England and the Cotswolds defined an uniformed Other whose encounters were distinguished only by their superficiality and levity. The construction of informed/uninformed opposition finds meaning through other oppositions; urban/rural, private/public, introspection/extroversion, speed/slowness. There were implications not only for the countryside but for citizenship. Matless argues that charabanc loads of people coming to the countryside were derided because they were not seen to engage in a particular configuration of knowledge, citizenship and patriotism - a particular way of encountering the countryside.[110] Emphasising a dearth of aesthetic or intellectual facilities or the qualities of good citizenship opened up the possibility of educating the uninformed Other in how to encounter the countryside in an acceptable way. It is to this issue of education that the next section turns. Though it may seem somewhat superficial to arguments about the Cotswolds, the next section seeks to contextualise discoveries of the Cotswolds through ongoing debates about discoveries of rural England and how the latter could be directed, if not controlled.

Learning How to See

The idea of an uninformed Other was invested with a powerful paradox. The despoliation of rural England by not only noisy fatuous visitors but also inappropriate building and development was to be deplored. On the other hand encountering rural England offered the possibility of rejuvenation to town dwellers distanced from the beneficial influence of the countryside. As Matless notes, "Open-air leisure was a part of England advancing morally, spiritually and physically"[111] but actually living in or visiting the countryside could not engender appreciation of it if people had undergone what T.S. Elliot called "the urbanisation of the mind".[112]

110Matless, D., 1995, *op cit.*

111*Ibid.*, p.96.

112Cunningham, V., 1993, *British Writers of the Thirties*, Claredon Press, p.231.

Joad was keenly aware of this paradox. He saw that the motorist who strayed off the main road was, whether he knew it or not, in search of "a retreat, bathed in an atmosphere, the fragrance that is distilled by old and traditional things. He finds it, but only for a moment, for, in the act of finding, he transforms it into something other than what he sought".[113] J.B. Priestley also struggled with this, reflecting that in the process of writing about Lower and Upper Slaughter in *English Journey* he was probably hastening their ruin as people discovered the villages.[114] Joad concluded that the townsman did not know how to "behave in the country or to commune with nature without destroying it".[115] Thus the question of educating people in how to behave in and appreciate the countryside became crucial. Such educational solutions also extended to stop "good taste" in all aspects of life being replaced by utilitarianism and commercialism, as Howard Marshall put it.[116]

In *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country* Joad formulated a series of convictions that shaped this thesis. The first was that "the experience of being in the country is good, good that is to say in itself, and that, lacking it, our lives are poorer for the lack".[117] Second, to enjoy this good it was not necessary to live and work in the country. The townsman out for a ramble, the week-end walker or even the "afternoon-in-the-country walker" could all benefit.[118] It is important to note that Joad privileges walking as the ideal way of encountering the countryside. He only sanctioned the use of the train or bus to get to the countryside, not to explore it. His third conviction was that nothing would prevent townspeople visiting the countryside no matter what he or anybody else thought.[119] His fourth conviction was that since "the right attitude to a use of the country does not come by chance or nature" the visiting townspeople could not be

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[113]Joad, C.E.M., 1938, *op cit.*, p.73.

[114]Priestley, J.B., *op cit.*, p.41.

[115]Joad, C.E.M., 1938, *op cit.*, p.74.

[116]Marshall, H., 1938, "The Rake's Progress", Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Readers' Union by arrangement with J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, p.169-170.

[117]C.E.M. Joad, 1945, *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*, Faber and Faber, p.21.

[118]*Ibid.*, p.21.

[119]*Ibid.*

expected to realise that the countryside is beautiful and treat it accordingly.[120] Consequently his fifth conviction was that "the education which is necessary before we can comport ourselves as we ought in the country and use it as it should be used, is an education which only the country can give".[121] People should not therefore be prevented from encountering the countryside. This was an uncharacteristically liberal thesis from Joad and there was, understandably, more to it than this.

The despoliation of the countryside could be avoided if people were educated in what Joad called "the right use of their leisure". "What form should education for the vastly increased leisure that the citizens of this country will enjoy in the not distant future assume?" he asked in "The People's Claim" - his contribution to Clough Williams Ellis' *Britain and the Beast*.[122] Lessons in country lore would certainly be necessary and they, with country manners, could be taught at every school. The latter would include being taught not to drive cars on the downs, tear up wild flowers, or leave newspapers and bottles on the grass. Joad restrained himself from including not playing radio sets or gramophones in wood and mountains or on boats and not driving up country lanes in case the reader accused him of "dressing up private prejudices as public requirements".[123] Joad's educational measures went still further:

> I would have every child required to pass an examination in country lore and country manners before he left school, and would award prizes and scholarships in the subject. There is something to be said for requiring every townsman who had not succeeded in passing this examination to wear an 'L' upon his back when he walked abroad in the country, for, until he has learnt the elementary manners of the countryside, he is no better qualified to be at large in a wood than a learning motorist is to be at large on a road. I would make gross breaches of country manners - the destruction of wild flowers, the indiscriminate taking of birds' eggs, the leaving of litter - an offence punishable, if repeated, by imprisonment.[124]

Volunteer countryside wardens would be vigilant for such offences. Joad also advocated preserving England until "the people as a whole" were capable of enjoying it. He

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[120]*Ibid.*, p.21.22

[121]*Ibid.*, p.23.

[122]Joad, C.E.M., 1938, *op cit.*, p.67

[123]*Ibid.*, p.80.

[124]*Ibid.*, p.80.

advocated setting aside "nature reserves, where men may be assured of occasional solitude, of the refreshment of country sights and sounds and of the companionship of wild things".[125] These would cover some 6,000 to 7,245 square miles in the Highlands of Scotland, the Lake District, Snowdon, the Peak District, the Yorkshire moors, the Sussex Downs, the New Forest, Dartmoor and Exmoor, the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean and the Malvern Hills. By setting up such reserves under the care of a Ministry of National Amenities Joad hoped to guarantee access to the countryside but simultaneously protect it from the worst excesses that resulted from countryside visiting.

E.M. Forster, writing in the same volume, argued for segregating and scheduling certain places "in the hope of the madness passing".[126] This was an ostensibly a more draconian approach than Joad's. Forster argued that once civilisation took a more sensible turn it would thank him and others (who he described as 'us', emphasising the tension between 'us' and 'them') for "bequeathing a few samples of the countryside, of the beauty that took three hundred years to grow, and can never be replaced".[127] He does not elaborate but the implication is clear; that people should be actively *prevented* from accessing certain parts of the countryside. Though Joad did not go as far as actually proposing this I believe he would have approved of the spirit of the suggestion. As Clough Williams Ellis remarked "part of the price for a saner and more ordered England must be paid for in liberty".[128]

The proper education of the uninformed was addressed in part through didactic guides, for instance Batsford's series of Home Front Handbooks. Gruffudd has noted that the 'Home-Front Handbooks', published in 1940, were designed for those evacuees and billeted soldiers living in the country for the first time. Essentially pocket manuals, they advised on *How to See Nature*, *How to Look at Old Buildings* and even *How to*

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[125]*Ibid.*, p.82.

[126]Forster, E.M., 1938, "Havoc", Williams Ellis, C. (ed), *Britain and the Beast*, Reader's Union by arrangement with J.M. Dent and Sons, p.45.

[127]*Ibid.*, p.45.

[128]Williams Ellis, C. (ed), 1938, "Introduction", *Britain and the Beast*, Reader's Union by arrangement with J.M. Dent and Sons, p.xviii.

Grow Food. Harry Batsford himself advised people on *How to see the Countryside.*[129] He was motivated by wartime events which compelled thousands of English urban-dwellers to a first-hand acquaintance with the country for the first time in their lives. Gruffudd argues that this "was perhaps the most explicitly didactic of the Batsford books designed, as it was, for the uninitiated or untutored visitor to the countryside".[130]

There were two groups or "classes" as Batsford called them for whom he felt he had no message whatsoever. The first of these "the large class of town dwellers who can only exist tolerably in the city, suburban or even slum surroundings".[131] In contrast there was another "large class - a band of cheery, active men and women, young and middle aged, entirely capable, excellently equipped, and altogether at home in their surroundings... They are the Initiated".[132] The privileging of the initiated with a capital 'I' brings home the difference that was seen to exist between the informed and the uninformed. Batsford's programmatic purpose was to teach those who could still be taught but he was under no illusions that some could not be redeemed. Batsford's book was predicated on the idea that while landscape could be appreciated without being understood, it was best appreciated given an understanding of form and structure. The tutored visitor, therefore, examined the countryside via its components of geology, topography, architecture, history, custom and so on.[133] Many of Batsford's examples were in the Cotswolds.

With similar didactic intent Edmund Vale wrote *See For Yourself - A Fieldbook of Sightseeing* in 1932 with revised editions appearing in 1935 and 1947. *See for Yourself* was "a manual on the art of sightseeing" designed not as a guidebook but to give "key clues to the ordinary range of ancient monuments which the traveller in Great Britain goes forth for to see".[134] Sightseeing for Vale was far more than a recreation; it was a philosophy and a technique that could, crucially, be *learned.* "Sightseeing is an art

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[129]Gruffudd, P., 1994, "Selling the countryside: representations of rural Britain", Gold, J. and Ward, S.V., (eds), *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions*, Wiley.
[130]*Ibid.*, p.256.
[131]Batsford, H., 1940, *op cit.*, p.2.
[132]*Ibid.*, p.2-3.
[133]Gruffudd, P., 1994, *op cit.*
[134]Vale, E., 1947, *See For Yourself - A Fieldbook of Sightseeing*, J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd, p.xviii.

without masters" he rhapsodised, "a religion without a priesthood, a science without experts, and a technique without a vocabulary".[135] The real sightseer must undertake to first, prepare his technique, second to practice it and third "to hark back and gloat on the new gains of his last active period".[136] The sightseer - invariably masculine in Vale's book - must learn which sights are "flairworthy" which "museworthy". The flairworthy sight would fill the sightseer with "the joy which any collector feels when a new specimen is added unto him. It is the acquisitiveness elevated into something holy by the skill of discretion".[137] Beyond the mere joy of finding something was the sense of discovery which Vale regarded as "a muse, something which exercises art as well as sentiment". These were the characteristics of the museworthy sight. The sightseer would, in Vale's view, "find his sights very much enhanced when he has learned to discern in them what is flairworthy and what is museworthy".[138] Furthermore his sightseeing would be immeasurably improved if he considered three things in assessing his sights: his frame of mind, the "dual reward" of the immediate pleasure of inspection followed by later reflection and lastly, the first sight of a place.

For a good frame of mind, freshness and enthusiasm were essential with the best results coming when "one can detach oneself from common environment and look at objects with what Ruskin calls the 'innocence of eye'.[139] Much depended on the means of transport. "The motoring man is at a distinct disadvantage, and the charabanc rider in worse case still" wrote Vale,

> The self-propelled always stand to get the best luck in frame of mind. They can feel the place draw them as they approach it; and there is a magic in that. The moment of arrival takes on a heightened galvanism from the privilege of prowess. The place is no more a goal. It is a possession, self-achieved, owned by sinews, blood, bone, and brain.[140]

For the discerning sightseer the dual reward of immediate gratification and careful reflection would, in Vale's terms, "look after itself". The third point - first sight - must

135 *Ibid.*, p.xvii.
136 *Ibid.*, p.3-4.
137 *Ibid.*, p.9.
138 *Ibid.*, p.11.
139 *Ibid.*, p.12.

be a matter of careful consideration because "while it is unique, it is evanescent. It is an impression which is only apparent to the eye of a total stranger".[141] When planning his first sight, the sightseer must consider five attributes of the place: its scientific value, artistic value, sentimental value, setting value and fashion bias. If these five things could be considered then at the first sight "the steel of imagination on the flinty clues of identity will give the spark. Is there any name for the tinder nearer than sympathy?"[142]

It is important to note that the 'sightseer' was markedly different from the 'tourist' in intent and method. Unlike the sightseer, the tourist would 'do' a town "and enter its name up in a book; or a mountain and notch a stick for it".[143] Tourists had succumbed to agencies and individuals who had brought "the whole scheme of sightseeing and tourism into disrepute". "What, in the world's eyes, is a tourist?" thundered Vale, "Is he not a man whom every one may mulct, for whom a 'season' of artificially raised prices is specially organised every year, and with whom no one should associate?"[144] Here Vale draws the distinction between the 'informed' and the 'uninformed', arguing that the tourist was the sightseer in larval stage. "He is not yet awake to what he can do for himself without the ministrations of agencies and hôteliers" he moaned, "They keep him inert and blind. They say, 'You cannot do sightseeing except in the summer, at which time we will sell you as much of this commodity as you can pay for'. Well, if a tourist is just going to tour, I have no message for him".[145] Vale's sightseer was intellectually equipped for the job, taking it on systematically to gain maximum returns. Not for him the "no sooner seen than done" approach of modern tourists who, for Vale, had been were at the mercy of transportation companies whose only concern was with "speeding up the sightseer".[146]

Joad's theories demonstrated a crude form of environmental determinism - live in ugly surroundings and your own capacity to appreciate beauty would be damaged. His

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140*Ibid.*, p.12.
141*Ibid.*, p.13.
142*Ibid.*, p.17.
143*Ibid.*, p.13.
144*Ibid.*, p.3.
145*Ibid.*, p.3.
146*Ibid.*, p.3.

solution, as I have shown, was education of the individual through contact with beautiful things - i.e. the countryside. The corollary of this was that the countryside should not be despoiled. Proponents of town and country planning sought to mobilise arguments about the poverty of aesthetic appreciation to call for changes to the built environment and the use of town and country planning. This is subtly different to Joad's approach coming as it does from the other side of the equation and is exemplified in Vaughan Cornish's *The Beauties of Scenery*.

Like his *Scenery of England*, Cornish's *The Beauties of Scenery* was predicated on the notion that combining science with a self-conscious apprehension of the countryside could enhance appreciation. It also had preservationist intent, for Cornish approached the Town And Country Planning Association to arrange for the book's publication, and asked for an Introduction that would show "the connection between [the book's] subject matter and the issues of planning with which the Association is concerned".[147] The connection that was made spoke to the need to reform the built environment to revitalise people's wilting aesthetic judgement and appreciation. The introduction, contributed by F.J. Osborn (Honorary Secretary of the TCPA), dwelt on how Cornish's attempts at "opening our eyes and awakening our other senses to the beauty of the world, and particularly our own island" were fundamentally linked to the project of town and country planning.[148]

Osborn reflected soberly that millions of people in Britain were physically and spiritually cut off from the beauty of the countryside. The result was that they greeted it "with rapture on the rare occasions when they can get to it" with disagreeable consequences.[149]

> The townsman on his excursions sometimes desecrates the country that he loves, but whose economy and necessities he does not understand. The ecstasy that he experiences on an open downland is so overwhelming that a dropped piece of orange peel or cigarette packet no more disturbs it than a robin's chirp would disturb his enjoyment of the triumphal trumpets of The Messiah. These things

147Osborn, F.J., 1943, "Introduction", Cornish, V., *The Beauties of Scenery - A Geographical Survey*, London, Frederick Muller Ltd., p.11.

148*Ibid.*, p.12.

149*Ibid.*, p.12.

> offend the more habitual frequenters of the countryside just because their delight in the whole scene is subdued by familiarity, and their apprehension now dwells on particularities and refinements.[150]

This was the result of what Osborn called 'aesthetic starvation' - an unresponsiveness to the world caused by "the squalor and ugliness which prevail in our cities and occasionally defile our rural lands" causing "a cataract of insensitivity or a film of illusion" to grow over people's eyes.[151] But this was only half the problem. "That the townsman's craving for countryside beauty is not just a holiday mood is shown by the very form of development that planners most deplore" noted Osborn sternly. Escaping his urban prison for an isolated bungalow or roadside villa the townsman frequently despoiled the countryside through bad design and clumsy siting. "Cultivated resentment" to the damage caused by sprawling and scattered development was not, in Osborn's view, enough. "We must look further, and deal with the deprivation that is its cause" he wrote, "The human passion for space, for sky... for contact with green and growing things, precedes the appreciation of artificial beauty, in the ordinary human soul".

The solution lay in planning not only new development in the countryside but also the cities. Modern planning could "protect good farm-lands from casual and ill-considered building, and provide for new industrial development and the houses that go with it by grouping them in well-planned new towns and in extensions of towns not already too large". In the cities proper planning could

> bring in the sun, the sky, trees and flowers into the old cities, reducing their congestion, and rebuilding them with homes making for a happy family life, gardens in which children may grow up with an appreciation of natural beauty, and gracious buildings in which a rich community life may flourish.[152]

Emphasis is placed not on the formal education of individuals but on the abstruse influence of people's surroundings. As S.P.B. Mais put it "I wonder what the aesthetic

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[150] *Ibid.*, p.12.
[151] *Ibid.*, p.13.
[152] *Ibid.*, p.13.

outlook of children born in the new houses that border the Great West Road will be like?"[153] Under careful planning the quality of aesthetic outlook could be assured.

This section has touched on the idea of educating people to encounter the countryside in acceptable ways. I have not attempted a comprehensive examination of the primary literature on this subject, which is vast. Instead I have attempted to illustrate briefly the point that educating people in how to see the countryside was precisely situated in larger debates about the intellectual, physical and moral condition of English people who were distanced from what was seen to be their spiritual home, a point I touched on in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

Writing in 1935 Joad admitted that he and some of his friends had, for some years, been drawing up a list "of places, inns, farms, cottages and so forth, to stay at in the country".[154] To be admitted the place must have the following qualifications: it must be in unspoilt countryside; it must be comfortable; the food might be simple but good; it must be cheap and motorists must not know it. There were places on Joad's list from the north of England, the Midlands and a few from Devon, Cornwall and East Anglia. Dorset, Witshire and the Cotswolds were well represented but entries for Hampshire were being systematically crossed off as the county became "increasingly over run". The Home Counties were all but unrepresented because there was practically no place left that possessed the required qualifications. By Joad's own admission the list was for private circulation only and was jealously guarded.[155] Joad's list finds its place in the conclusion to this chapter because in it the themes and ideas I have been discussing here find an intersection.

Joad's list is in part about ways of seeing authenticated by Joad and his friends. The list is jealously guarded from those who, lacking the facilities for proper appreciation of the unspoilt countryside, would undoubtedly sack the few remaining

[153]Mais, S.P.B., 1938, *op cit.*, p.216.
[154]Joad, C.E.M., 1939, *op cit.*, p.206.

examples. Here precisely is an informed group defining and indeed defending themselves from an uninformed other. Joad's secret list defends the countryside by controlling access to it. It throws up class barricades by only being available to people known to Joad's friends and their social circle.

The list is a map that leads individuals to the remaining beautiful and tranquil places away from the vapid masses. The places on the list have not as yet been made into 'beauty spots'. Their rurality is uncompromised by an invasion of not only town dwellers but urban icons - petrol pumps, cheap hotels, bungalows, faux antique shops and the like. In the process of finding England everywhere the list contains places to which the recalcitrant other have not yet brought their inappropriate forms of outdoor recreation.

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[155] *Ibid.*, p.207.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

> That is all I have to say about the Cotswold hills. I do not know how much of it is true, and how much downright lies, how much exaggeration, and how much unavoided whimsy.[1]

This thesis has been about the power of landscape as an idiom for representing national identity. It has contributed to and developed the extant literature on the construction of England and Englishness and has challenged the South Country - a conceptual tool by which the construction of England and Englishness has been understood. Developing the premise that landscapes can picture the nation, I have foregrounded the regional identity of the Cotswolds to show that such local identities were informed by and themselves informed the construction of English national identity. As Daniels has argued, national identity is inflected by other forms of cultural geographic identity, of region and locality.[2]

I have examined textual representations of the Cotswolds and England, principally from non-fictional sources such as guide books and other forms of rural writing. As this thesis is situated in broadly humanistic geography I have not assumed that these texts provide transparent windows on the world, but that they are social constructs which I have unpacked by reference to the intellectual, social and cultural contexts in which they were produced. In doing so my reading and (re)production of these texts is contingent and partial.

In framing my research I considered the refiguring of landscape and culture in the new cultural geography. This was to emphasise two points. First that landscape is a social construct, the meaning of which cannot be unproblematically realised through its representations or explained through a superorganic notion of culture. Second, and in a related point, the multiplicity of cultures gives rise to many readings and meanings of the Cotswolds. Informed by these theoretical positions I have constructed a narrative about

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[1]Henriques, R., 1950, *The Cotswolds*, Vision of England series edited by Williams Ellis, C. and Williams Ellis, A., Paul Elek, p.110.

the symbolic landscapes of the Cotswolds and England.

In my introduction I established three questions which guided research and writing. I would like to provide some answers to these here. The first question was how were the Cotswolds represented as a unique place and set of places? The area was constructed as an upland region thrown into sharp relief by the pastoral landscapes of the Severn Vale. Contrasts also existed between its high wolds and secluded valleys. It was a region which could provoke dislike as much as enjoyment and which could evoke the most profound meditations. The Cotswolds' capriciousness and ineffability paradoxically contributed to its well defined identity which represented a version of an ideal England. If England's identity was seen to rest in the *diversity* of landscapes, cultures and regional identities, the Cotswolds could be identified as the best of England *because of*, not in spite of, its apparent difference from other regions. Herein lies one of my major criticisms of the South Country.

What were the key themes in the construction of the Cotswolds' local identity? The themes of spatial and temporal boundedness, the door ajar to the past and the garden of stone persist throughout the primary source material. Through these themes the Cotswolds were constructed as an epitome of moral order and aesthetic harmony.[3] However, it has been apparent throughout the thesis that this question cannot be satisfactorily answered in isolation. These are themes which are not confined to the construction of the Cotswolds' local identity but which are informed by and themselves inform the construction of national identity. Therefore this question can only be answered alongside my third research question: to what extent were these representations of a unique local culture, landscape and identity informed by and themselves inform the construction of England and Englishness?

Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated an intimate relationship between the construction of the Cotswolds' identity and English national identity. The garden of stone metaphor for the Cotswolds was related to the construction of England as a

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[2]Daniels, S., 1993, *Fields of Vision - Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Polity.
[3]*Ibid.*

gardenesque landscape of organic communities. This constituted both the aesthetic representation of the nation and the "imagined grounding of a nation in a particular environment and the presumed moral attributes of that environment".[4] When the Cotswolds are (re)created as a physical and spiritual garden paradise, the ideal condition of England is evoked. This ideal features indigenous rural communities distinguished by closeness to the soil, the right use of local materials for buildings that blended into their surroundings and by a way of life that harmonised with the natural rhythms of the seasons. The Cotswold garden of stone was also a moral topography that criticised the present condition of England by suggesting that such organic communities are just in the process of being lost. The threat was posed by inappropriate building materials and styles which bring disharmony to the villages of England and which disrupt the intimate relation of building, architecture, soil and stone.

I further explored the relationship between regional and national identity by examining the use of the past in the construction of both of these. In the Cotswolds difference and uniqueness were articulated through the language of boundedness both in time and space. The Cotswolds were seen to be marooned in the past and this represented a conscious setting apart and privileging of an older version of England from contemporary versions. The criticism of modern life that was implicit in the use of the garden of stone metaphor and gardenesque versions of England is reworked even more powerfully by situating the best of England in the past. Calling the Cotswolds and England 'old' simultaneously indicated both continuity and demise. This was further reinforced by the use of the door ajar metaphor in writing about both the Cotswolds and England. The door ajar metaphor described a sense of being privileged to see and record something just in the process of being lost. In Cotswold writing, the idea of a door ajar to the past received particular power from the sense that discontinuity, change and progress at large in some parts of England had only just started to affect the Cotswolds. Their boundedness and difference from contemporary England was highlighted. Similar ideas resonated through the construction of national identity where England was divided into east and west with the metaphor of geological strata being used to reinforce the importance of regional difference and boundedness, and evoke past - and better -

[4]Gruffudd, P., 1994, "Back to the land: historiography, rurality and the nation in interwar Wales",

Englands.

All this is to suggest that although the idea of the South Country may have currency amongst academics of the late twentieth century, it has very little basis in the primary source evidence. Often evoked but never clearly defined, the South Country has been used to describe a symbolic landscape of Englishness. However, as I have attempted to show diverse regional identities and landscapes were more important to constructions of national identity. The South Country imposes a false homogeneity on the idea of Englishness and denies that the geographical imaginations of those who went in search of, discovered and imagined rural England could range far and wide across the landscape. Furthermore, by relying on vague topographical definitions and "yardsticks of rurality", the idea of the South Country ignores the imaginative processes at work in the construction of regional and national identities. Because of this the Cotswolds sit uncomfortably in definitions of the South Country. I have gone further and argued that England could be found everywhere it was felt and seen to be. It was felt and seen to be primarily in lightly cultivated, lightly populated rural landscapes wherever in England these could be found. This is not to suggest that these middle landscapes represent merely a topographical space between cities and mountains - this would be as restrictive a concept as the South Country. Rather the idea of middle landscapes represent a condition of society in which nature and culture are balanced, the ideal place in the cycle between "the organic wild and unformed [and] the inorganic, controlled and ordered".[5] This is why the garden of stone metaphor and gardenesque representations of England were so pervasive and important.

I have also shown that "finding England everywhere" was not just undertaken in topographical books and non-fictional rural writing. Rural England was being 'discovered' physically, in cars, charabancs, trains and on foot. These assorted discoveries were fraught with tensions for while England was being discovered and represented it was simultaneously seen to be destroyed by that discovery. All the themes from this thesis resonated through chapter seven. That chapter showed precisely that the

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Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 19, p.61.

[5]Cosgrove, D., 1993, "Landscapes and myths, gods and humans", Bender, B. (ed), *Landscape - Politics and Perspectives*, Berg Publishers, pp.290-291.

discovery of rural England was not confined to the South Country but took place all over England from Cornwall to the Wash, from the South East to the Lake District and all the parts of England in between.

Thus the most important ideas in the construction of national identity in the period 1880-1950 were - paradoxically perhaps - *locality* and a set of values that orbited round the notion of locality and individuality, closeness to the past, non-materialism and tradition. These are nebulous socially constructed terms but were nonetheless seen to be the stuff that England was made of. It was precisely this individualism and locality that was seen to be threatened by repetitive mechanical work, the universalism of culture products - books, cinema and music - and the demise of vernacular architecture, crafts and building materials.

The construction of the Cotswolds and England is a good deal less clear cut than the notion of the South Country suggests. It has become evident that these constructions have taken place through omission, selection and imagination. Further research is needed to seek out the harmonies, dissonances and complexities present through unpacking other regional or local identities. This thesis has made use of some of the very rich primary sources that point to the seemingly unimagined complexity of English national and regional identity and indicates a new direction for debates on England and Englishness.

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